1995-1999-Branch & Executive Minutes – Forward Group

1995

1995-01Jan17	Minutes of FG: York U., Educational on Zionism
1995-03Mar7a	Minutes of FG: Internal debate on NDP position
1995-03Mar28a	Minutes of FG: Correspondence from West Coast tendency
1995-04Apr28a	Minutes of FG: Our participation in Socialist Action May Day event
**1995-May16*	*Minutes of FG: Report on Freedom Socialist Party, FG's perspective*
1995-06June6a	Minutes of FG: NDP facing upcoming (Ontario) election
**1995-June13*	*J.D.'s comments on FG discussion on NDP following ON election*
1995-08Aug22a	Minutes of FG: Membership; Mandel memorial, Ontario NDP
1995-09Sept21a	Minutes of FG: Membership: Fred Callaghan & Leo Panitch
1995-09Sept21d	(undated) NDP in Manitoba election

1996

1996-04Apr30a	Minutes of FG:: Membership, crisis in NDP
1996-06June18a	Minutes of FG: NDP victory in BC contrasts with by-election ON
1996-09Sept4a	Minutes of FG: Art Grey bequest and Trotskyist archival project
1996-12Dec18a	Minutes of FG: Harry to present our NDP orientation to US labor party

1997

1997-01Jan8a	Minutes of FG: Membership
1997-01Jan29a	Minutes of FG: Correspondence & Membership
1997-06June25a	Minutes of FG: Educational discussion on Federal election results
1997-11Nov19a	Minutes of FG: Educational: review of our Canada-US Relations pubs

*1997-Nov19 *Toronto* Sun *clip: "Lawyer guilty of $20G fraud" (Codina guilt denied)*

1998

1998-02Feb11a	Minutes of FG: Correspondence: Romanow NDP fund drive
1998-04Apr5	(Notes of a FG discussion) Marxist Institute Winter lecture series
1998-11Nov4a	Minutes of FG: Membership & Contacts met by Harry in BC
1998-11Nov18a	Minutes of FG: Membership: New Year's event
1998-12Dec2a	Minutes of FG: Correspondence: re archival work

1999

1999-01Jan20a	Minutes of FG: Report on second issue of RMT (split from BIDOM)
**1999-Jan*	*"Second issue of "Revolutionary Marxism Today" (ex-SWP) contents*
1999-02Feb6a	Unsigned document (Kopyto?) on RCMP recent terrorist acts in Alberta
1999-02Feb10a	Minutes of the FG: J.D. Report on (Ross Dowson) archives
1999-03Mar24a	Minutes of FG: Report on BIDOM tendency split from SWP-US
1999-03Mar24i p.9:	Lois Bedard report on International Women's Day
1999-05May12a	Minutes of FG: Correspondence, Report on Serbian anti-war activities
1999-09Sept28a	Minutes of FG: Membership: united left tribute to Vern Olson
1999-10Oct26a	Minutes of FG: Vern Olson memorial held by FG & Socialist Action
1999-11Nov22a	Minutes of FG: Commemoration for Vern Olson
1999-12Dec15a	Minutes of FG: Membership: report on Olson memorial

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING

January 17, 1995

Meeting commenced at 8:15 p.m.

Chairperson Gord Doctorow

Present: John Darling Lois Bedard, Joe Steinbok, Gord Doctorow, Harry Kopyto

Away without explanation: John Glenn

MOTION CARRIED to seat Awad Mohamed

MINUTES:

Minutes of meeting of January 5, 1995, adopted.

BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF MINUTES:

Gerry Hunnius appeared not overly enthusiastic about the idea of having a York University sponsored conference on the left in the NDP. Lois will speak to him again.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Harry Paine is now on line with Gord through Freenet. Lois Bedard couldn't get to the mail box.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

Jeff Smith is now working as a consultant/social worker assisting people regarding their entitlement to social services.

EDUCATIONAL:

Comrade Awad identified Zionism as a "unique" source of imperialism. He dealt primarily with disagreements that he had with the Gary article in the latest issue of BIDOM on the Palestinian/Israeli issues. He disagreed with the suggestions that the PLO had become linked in interests with the Israeli State.

In his Educational, he explained that the '48-49 experiences smashed the Palestinian identity. The PLO in its initial stages under Shakury was linked to the reactionary Arab States. In its later stage under Fateh domination, it developed a nationalist identity reasserting Palestinian national consciousness for the first time since the earlier defeat. Elements in the PLO were also attracted at this initial stage towards panarabic nationalism symbolized by Nassar and supported in its leftist variance by the

(archive ends)

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING

March 7, 1995

Meeting commenced at 8:25 p.m.

Attendance: Gord Doctorow, Lois Bedard, Harry Kopyto

Late: John Glenn

MOTION CARRIED to have expedited agenda.

EDUCATIONAL:

There was discussion of the Educational on the Forward Group's position on the NDP. Harry Kopyto gave a good speech and laid out the parameters of the discussion effectively and convincingly. However, his conclusion was too broad, unfinished and raised questions which undid some of the positive aspects of his initial presentation.

John Darling's presentation was well thought out and effective. It offered a strong counter-position to Harry's exposition. However he was overly polemical and passionate. The discussion itself was on a fairly high level except for one or two exceptions.

There was a general discussion about John Darling's letter on Quebec. It contains insightful observations and deserves a more serious discussion. It was generally agreed that the broad social/economic issues are become inseparable from the nationalist yearnings of the Quebecois and that the most dynamic forces in Quebec society have not responded or are not prepared to mobilize for Parizeau's vision of an independent Quebec and what was needed was a real constituent assembly.

It was generally felt that it would be useful to have a discussion on Quebec which our close comrades could participate in. This is especially so in light of the significant gains made by PQ governments in protecting the Quebec culture and language over the last 10 or 15 years. The classical indicia of national oppression may not all be evident in the traditional form in Quebec and a consideration of our traditional position on Quebec as they have been for several decades requires re-examination in light of current developments. It was considered that to have a broad public forum on such a topic would not be of great benefit as it would be difficult for us to discuss as revolutionists what our position is while having to deal with people on a variety of levels of development who might participate in the discussion in a manner which would hamper its focus. In addition, there is reason to

believe that, in time, others with clear differences including sectarian groups would come to our meetings if they were held publicly and advertised thereby also undermining the possibility of a serious and developed line discussion. There is no reason in principle why we could not have a meeting at some point in the future with somebody like Dick Fidler being invited to speak along with others or participating in the Marxist institute class in Quebec (which unfortunately we did not attend or know about other than John). However, what we need right now is a meeting very much like the one on the NDP to discuss our position on Quebec.

MOTION CARRIED to postpone to the next meeting further discussion and a decision on having a Quebec meeting open to our periphery.

KOPYTO/CODINA DEFENCE:

Harry Kopyto is appearing before three liberal judges on March 13th on his Application for Leave to Appeal his disbarment. If he fails to get such leave, he will have exhausted all legal remedies and then would only be able to petition the Law Society to get readmitted. Meanwhile Angie Codina has retained Alan Gold to represent her on her Application for Leave to Appeal the decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal requiring her to be tried again on the immigration charge.

Calendar was read and meeting adjourned circa 10:30 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING

March 28, 1995

Meeting commenced at 8:40 p.m.

Chair: Lois Bedard

Attendance: Gord Doctorow, Lois Bedard, Harry Kopyto, John Darling

Late: Joe Steinbok, John Glenn

MINUTES:

MOTION CARRIED to adopt minutes of meeting of March 7, 1995 subject to correction.

CORRESPONDENCE:

We received a letter from Marcel Hatch on behalf of the Freedom Socialist Party as well as several issues of the paper. This appears to be a group which has been around for about 20 years on the West Coast of the United States and Canada. The letter was very enthusiastic and unusually open in greeting us. This group deserves further investigation and John Darling was assigned to contact them when he goes out to Vancouver in the near future as well as to review the documentation which they presented. It is interesting to note that they openly declared themselves Trotskyists, have connections in other parts of the United States and internationally though they have not been the subject of any communications we have had with other Trotskyist tendencies in the past.

It was agreed that we did not have a full opportunity to deal with Harry Paine's recent lengthy letter. However, Harry will be

receiving copies of our minutes so that he will be aware of our ongoing discussion regarding the NDP experience and hopefully a partial transcript of the discussion which took place at our forum on the NDP will also be made available to him as well as other out-of-town comrades.

MEMBERSHIP:

Harry reported on a conversation which he had with Ron Hugh. The Belleville UIC operation has both PIPS and PSAC in it. Ron indicated that he would appreciate input from the comrades regarding the work-to-rule strategy adopted by PSAC to fight impending layoffs and cutbacks as well as what strategy and demands the comrades might wish to suggest be raised in order to stop the closing of operations such as the Belleville plant.

Comrades felt that the fundamental problem of course are those of increased unemployment, intensification of labour, longer hours of work at less pay which are affecting all other sectors of the economy at present and which fall within the classic framework of Marxist analysis as means used by the bourgeoisie to increase its profit level. Fundamentally therefore local campaigns can't be developed to solve the general effect of this trend of capitalism. Within this framework, the general demands that one can raise in the Belleville situation do not differ from our general demands elsewhere. There are no local solutions. The emphasis must be on saving jobs and opposing federal cutbacks. We should suggest to Ron that he attempt to link himself as much as possible to the

anti-cutbacks movement. For example, Maude Barlow could be invited to speak in Belleville in a "town meeting" along with representatives of the Union, local politicians, the sitting member, etc.. The theme would be to save jobs and oppose federal cutbacks. In this context, we could encourage additional public meetings where we could develop a left-wing social agenda.

In addition, comrades felt that it was not likely that the UIC operation would be moved to Toronto or another centre. New technology can be applied anywhere and the problem was more fundamentally that the government was eradicating UIC payments and the UIC scheme. There would be no particular value from an opportunist of electoral point of view to move the plant at present and no need to do so in light of the technology in existence.

With respect to PSAC, its present strategy of fighting the cutbacks and layoffs including a work-to-rule CAMPAIGN reflects fundamentally a desire of its membership to respond. We should probably not get overly involved in attempting to assess the tactical advantages or disadvantages of any particular strategy. It may be that the weakness of seniority clauses in PSAC contracts may make individual workers vulnerable and isolated. We should direct Ron however to encourage the Union movement to participate with community groups in an anti-cutback strategy as part of its response. The emphasis should be not on fighting these problems as local issues but in integrating the Union movement into an effort to stop the destruction of Canada as a country by the removal of jobs. Thus,

we should express outrage that all communities are being victimized by the Liberal Party cutbacks.

There was a discussion of having a forum on Quebec which would be aimed at our periphery. It was tentatively agreed that we would want to have it on May 7th, that it would be aimed at our periphery and unaffiliated contacts, that the discussion itself should probably focus on at least four aspects of the Quebec question. These would be:

--the historical position of Quebec as an oppressed nation and whether it still applies to it and why Quebec is an oppressed nation;

--our position on the present referendum campaign on sovereignty including the issue of a constituent assembly as a necessary aspect of a campaign to mobilize the population behind a vote for independence;

--the question of native rights and its interplay with the Quebec independence movement focusing on what the Quebec movement's position should be with respect to native rights for self determination, and finally the class character of the independontist movement and the role of organized labour and pro-labour forces in the struggle for an independent Quebec. It was agreed that John Darling and Harry Kopyto be responsible for presenting outlines of their positions on these questions and then

we could emphasize extensive discussion from the floor. It was also agreed that Lois chair it, that we have the forum at the Workmen's Circle again, that we ask Joe Steinbok to prepare the snacks as he did so well at our last forum.

There was also a general discussion regarding the situation in Quebec at present. It was clear that the sovereignist movement should clearly wait until it is advantageous to hold a referendum. The BQ's recent position in defence of the right of railway strikers shows its adaptability to the left (we note that the NDP's final capitulation on the issue) and a greater flexibility than the PQ has shown which appears to favour a more quiescent approach reflecting the Quebec national bourgeoisie' interests. In any event, it is now clear that only a bare majority of the Francophone Quebecois support sovereignty and that a general mobilization of all forces is a sine qua non. The Quebec women's movement have come behind native rights for self determination and the demand for a real constituent assembly has recently been renewed. The grandstanding involved in the "turbot" war with Spain and the postponement of the more decisive aspects of the federal Liberal Party's massive campaign of cutbacks are both efforts to counter the sovereignist appeal which efforts can be frustrated by a mobilization of the Quebec population in general and the holding of the referendum at an appropriate time.

NEW BUSINESS: 6

Harry gave a brief report on the Oakwood Riding Association where opposition forces succeeded in gaining about 130 votes against the 190 won by Rizzo.

Bob Rae at the Provincial Council meeting last week attended by 300 (there was a massive campaign to get so many to attend) emphasized his opposition to federal Liberal cutbacks, his belief that electoral success will now follow the establishment of the NDP as a moderate Party and his attack on the provincial Liberals flip flopping on their positions.

Lois reported that 15 people attended a Socialist Challenge meeting where Jerry Foaley spoke. He seemed tired and no discussion took place afterwards with Lois who was present. It was agreed that the Forward Group would sponsor and participate if invited in the May Day activity organized by Weisleder.

IT WAS MOVED that our next Educational deal with the constituent assembly concept in Anglophone Canada.

Meeting adjourned circa 10:35 p.m.

SUBJECT TO CORRECTIONS

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING

April 25, 1995

Meeting commenced at 8:20 p.m.

Chair: Joe Steinbok

Attendance: Gord Doctorow, Joe Steinbok, John Darling
Lois Bedard, Harry Kopyto

Away without Explanation: John Glenn (getting his PhD at the final defence of his thesis)

MINUTES:

MOTION CARRIED to adopt minutes as mailed out to comrades.

CORRESPONDENCE:

The Socialist Action group has organized its annual May Day event on May 6, 1995. Comrades should attend if they have no other commitments. It was moved that the branch advise contacts of the May Day event at the same time that we advise them of our Forum on Quebec the following day. The branch was not mobilizing for the May Day event but would participate in it.

There was also a general discussion on our relationships to the Socialist Action and Socialist Challenge groups. We do not have an orientation to either of them. Our attitude at present is to stand aside from them. Neither of the groups has a clear understanding or is rooted in the general traditions of Canadian Trotskyism and while their positions bear a superficial resemblance to ours, the content of their political understanding is different from ours in essence.

It was also moved that we prepare a brief statement to be read on behalf of the Forward Group at the May Day rally. The statement should contain the following idea:

> May Day reminds us of the history of the working class and the relevance of the class struggle in this country. We affirm our commitment to a mass orientation to the labour movement as a whole and to the mass political expression of the consciousness of the working class in this country. In addition, we affirm at this time of a capitalist offensive against the international working class our commitment to the central concept of a reduced work week with the same take-home pay as the only viable and immediate way in which full

employment can be achieved. Our central strategy is to move forward with a mass orientation.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

John Darling gave a report on the Freedom Socialist Party as requested at the last meeting. He reported both on several newspapers and articles written by its members as well as his correspondence with them. It was noted that the Freedom Socialist Party appears to be California-based and its representatives in Vancouver attack the alleged rightist deviation in the LSA and also suggested that the Canadian movement was right to identify with the group in the SWP in the USA during the 1950's. Their documents indicate that they appear to be confused about Trotskyist history and their calls for a revolutionary socialist NDP and other odd political positions taken by them which appear unrealistic and ignorant suggest that they may be an amoeba-like tendency simply identifying with whatever opportunist openings might avail themselves. This appears to be confirmed as well by their emphasis on the Black and women's struggle in the United States to the virtual exclusion of any other struggles. Their sectarianism and confusion is shown in the total absence of understanding of any transitional approaches to situations and they appear to change shape and grab what they can in any context. It would therefore appear that they are essentially sectarians who see their tradition going back to a 1950's group that dismissed the Canadian sectionist as Pabloist. In light of their apparent ultra-left sectarian attitudes, we should have a standoffish attitude to their efforts to integrate us and their apparent proclamation of their tendency's purpose to be the centre for regroupment of Trotskyist forces in Canada.

MOTION CARRIED to adopt the line of John's report.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

John reported there was a balance of over $700.00 in our account. Art Gray had indicated that he would make an additional donation some time in the near future. Should we decide to engage in some publication efforts following the upcoming election provincially, we would have sufficient funds available to undertake that task.

MOTION CARRIED to expedite the agenda and hold an Educational on issues arising out of Harry Paine's letter to us some time ago.

Gord Doctorow presented an outline of Harry Paine's letter reviewing the main points that he had raised with us and pointing out his continued and ongoing insight and efforts to come to terms with the fundamental issues posed by the Canadian class struggle.

Harry's comments about closer collaboration with the SA/SC ignores the reality that neither of these groups have our traditions and though there are superficial resemblances, in practice we have sharp differences. Harry appears to tend to underestimate the objective problems that are behind the difficulties which the left is experiencing and how ultimately a subjective crisis reflects the objective problems facing the class as a whole. The differences and disunity within the left and revolutionary groups does not stem so much from their attitudes to each other as from the problems of sectarianism. The problem is not so much that some of the revolutionary groups inherited single issuism and replicated this tradition as a formula to solve all their problems as much as their degeneration into sects. For many of these groups, the Forth International has more of a romantic attachment rather than as the ultimate definer of their politics in Canada and many of them appear as Harry points out more oriented to international politics than knowing what is happening in their own backyard. Such disunity within the left can even be seen among leftist elements in the CAW whose leadership initially let us move out boldly against Bob Rae even promising at one time to ensure that Buzz Hargrove would speak at a Provincial Council meeting and then pulled back publicly isolating us and causing us a degree of embarrassment.

Weisleder and the other sectarian groups have a different historical understanding of the NDP from ours and though our positions may superficially appear conjunctural, we are going into different political space from them. Weisleder's egotism prevents him from learning from his experiences and those around him reflect not a growing but rather a dissipating and lowering political consciousness. The membership of the sectarian so-called Trotskyist groups are essentially leftovers and are not oriented to the mass political expression of the working class which is a pre-condition for moving forward.

The trade union leadership can't walk away from practical politics. The economic crises will always force them to have to deal with the bourgeois state apparatus on a political basis. While we moved out with the Forums for Socialist Alternatives, ran several forums, attracted attention and mobilized some activists two or three years ago, we gave expression to what we hoped would be a developing left wing in the NDP and among social and labour activists taking on Rae in Ontario. It must be said that the opportunity to move out in this direction was better than now. The situation is less open and ripe for moving out boldly than it has been in any other recent period. The issue is therefore not volition or leadership as the solution to the problem but rather a crisis in the class itself impelled by objective conditions. Most persons who did come to our forums and responded to our call to take on the right wing leadership of the NDP which included some CAW members, people like Mel Watkins, etc., didn't <u>understand</u> the strategic importance of the NDP. They <u>felt</u> it, however. But they were not ready to put themselves forward to lead the struggles, to take steps to unify

their own forces behind a common program and to structure a real organized fight against the ONDP leadership. Such failure and refusal of the several dozens of good activists and radicals who came around us to move out boldly, their passivity, ultimately reflected the crisis of the class and the crisis of the radical movement.

The current period therefore must be characterized as one of sorting out our politics. The idea that the Forward Group could influence significant numbers in some important way in the current situation is absurd. Three or four years of Bob Rae's domination of the NDP and his efforts to transform its base into a new moderate non-labour majority cut off from its socialist and pro-labour traditions has caused despair and despondency with the solutions that he put forward, not so much with socialism. According to a poll this month, close to half of Ontarians regard the NDP as a voice for business and not representing the poor. It is Keysianism that is being rejected and even a weak version of it, not socialism, by Ontario workers left without a perceived real class alternative in the current elections. Yet in the past, the NDP posed, even if it did not offer, such an opportunity for building socialism. Even at that time, though, the broad left capitulated towards right-wing reformism. People like Wayne Roberts dropped away. Traditional leftists like Kay MacPherson and Dan Heap capitulated and even attacked the Left Caucus. Throughout, the labour leadership, left and right, opposed or stood aside from the Left Caucus and opposed any efforts to radicalize the NDP, even ridiculing us at times. At no time prior to the current situation was there a consistent opportunity over time for unified militant class struggle politics to play a dominant role inside the NDP. Therefore, the current decline of the prospects for such a strategy are not a result of the subversion of a past tradition as much as a continuation of a political pattern that has existed for many decades.

However, the fact is that the NDP remains central to any prospect of bringing revolutionary socialism to Canada as a whole. Ultimately, this is the fundamental difference that we have with all the other so-called revolutionary groups. The working class is now almost evenly split on the question of the ONDP with a significant sector who have not yet abandoned it. Harry Paine appears to overestimate the importance of social movements in the current situation, even in Quebec.

Gord pointed out that single-issue movements still exist and continue to operate far and wide. They indicate that the class struggle pot is still boiling, that the working class and social activists have not been smashed and defeated and demoralized though they are in retreat. By and large, the number of activists in various movements has not declined. The task, however, is to lead and not push these groups into action. The working class has not been defeated decisively either economically or politically.

Though there has been a decline in wage settlements and the number of trade-unionized workers, such declines have been relatively slow and moderate. In some instances the working class has moved out as in the service industry, unionizing new sectors. In Ontario, it has to be said that a major portion of the working class does not see the NDP as an alternative any longer. Thus Harry's comments about passive abstentionism parallel our own in this Province. From the point of view of reforming and restructuring the NDP as a clear class struggle Party in the coming election, this is a dead issue. Harry poses the issues of how to stop people from moving into despair and the need to pose our revolutionary positions but comes to a conclusion similar to ours on abstention.

There was a general discussion about the current political situation and how the Forward Group could best fit into it. It was generally agreed that our role was educational. Lois emphasized the importance of women being integrated into the labour force, the significance of reproductive rights in freeing them from destitution and being tied to isolation at home and politicizing the level of consciousness of the working class as a whole. In this regard, it is to be noted that the traditional proportion of voters for the NDP and left politics has changed dramatically so that women far outnumber men as NDP voters in recent elections. Lois talked about the real crisis posed by the jobless recovery and the likelihood that the recession would last for a considerable period of time. She talked about how women were forced more into "home work" and how the permanent technological revolution systematically was creating a situation for the intensification of exploitation. Harry pointed out that the current economic situation would inevitably recreate political consciousness on a higher level and that the experience that a sector of the working class has gone through with the NDP in Ontario with reformism will not be lost in the future. He took note of the recomposition of the working class due to economic restructuring, the completion of the integration of women into the working class and the likelihood that ultimately the intensification of exploitation would result in unified struggles. There was some discussion about the situation in France where the Lambertiste candidate received more than 5% of the vote (compared to 9% for the CP). His vote was dramatically higher than any previous vote received by a Trotskyist candidate. We do not know how many votes Krivine received.

There was also a general discussion about the possibility of putting out a bulletin which we would be able to circulate among the left generally in the name of the Forward Group following the NDP election. We certainly do not have the resources or numbers to carry on a more ambitious publication such as Harry suggested. If we attempted to do so, we would just burn ourselves out and substitute ourselves for others. This is not a time when the Forward Group can undertake major projects. While we were not wrong to move out as we did at the height of the crisis within the NDP in Ontario, the benefits we had were minimal and the cost was

high. The objective conditions ultimately do not permit us now to do much more than play a low-keyed educational role which is what is on the agenda at this time.

It was noted that Harry Paine appears to overestimate CHOICES both in terms of the politics which it represents as well as the independent role which it could play.

MOTION CARRIED to cancel the balance of the agenda.
Calendar was read and meeting adjourned circa 11:00 p.m.

Minutes SUBJECT TO APPROVAL.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING

June 6, 1995

Meeting commenced at 8:45 p.m.

Chairperson: John Darling

AGENDA:

MOTION CARRIED to expedite agenda.

ATTENDANCE:

Present: Gord Doctorow, Lois Bedard, Harry Kopyto, John Darling

Away without Explanation: John Glenn

Away with Reason: Joe Steinbok

MINUTES:

Minutes of previous meeting of May 16, 1995 adopted except for the following correction. The report of the minutes regarding the discussion regarding Harry Paine's critique to us did not accurately reflect the tone of the discussion. Harry's summary was unnecessarily acerbic and macho. Harry was instructed to record more accurately and less polemically comments made in discussions

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

Joe Steinbok is at the Branson Hospital with an infection. Comrades should keep in touch with him. Hopefully he will be out soon.

NDP:

There was a general discussion regarding the up-coming election. A motion was made and adopted that a vote for the NDP in the current election is not likely to be significant and that we should generally vote for the NDP but adapt to the particular circumstances that each of the comrades find themselves in. For example, in Harry's riding, Joe Flexer obviously represents the

traditional positions of the NDP and pro-labour positions and a vote for him would be much more significant than a vote for Tony Rizzo with his discredited anti-labour background and right-wing stance having also been abandoned by the progressives and Blacks in the riding.

In Gord's riding where a weak candidate is running on a platform which at best raises the political issue of defending medical services from attack by the federal government, Gord is contemplating formally declining his ballot. In Eglinton riding where Harry lives, an unknown NDP candidate is running with a leaflet which emphasizes first and foremost controlling the deficit. A vote for the NDP there would be meaningless. In John's downtown riding, where a movement has developed behind Brent Hawkes who is the NDP candidate with a long-standing position as a leader of the Gay Rights movement and where significant numbers are mobilized behind him, we would of course vote for the NDP.

In Etobicoke, Joyce is not working in the NDP campaign. There is no movement at all in the riding and the candidate is running on his own resources isolated from any base and without pretensions to of a serious campaign. In York Mills where Lois lives, the riding has not been mobilized, the candidate and his supporters will likely work in another riding on election day, the headquarters is the back room of the president's home and Lois who had volunteered her services was basically told that there was no need for her to help as two or three people have been designated to put up signs, the leaflets are going to be mailed, etc.

There are three independent labour candidates running. There are 7 NDP'ers running in opposition to the social contract.

In assessing our position, we ask ourselves whether the NDP government's tenure has solidified and advanced the unity of the class or set it back. There is no perception whatever that a vote for the NDP is a vote to elect labour to power. Sid Ryan is opposed to voting for the NDP, John Murphy from the Hydro workers' 15,000 member local is calling for considering a vote for the NDP in light of Conservative Party Harris' campaign for privatizing Hydro and Wilson is backing the NDP despite formal OFL opposition. Hargrove has equivocated while White has come out with a personal position in favour of the ONDP, without any indication that it is the CLC's position. The labour movement remains divided and while there may be a tendency for the NDP to win some support from some CAW locals here and there, the party has no life, the activists are not involved in the campaign and there is a general sense of malaise. Those involved in the campaigns are generally uncritical sycophants of the right-wing leadership.

There are 7 candidates running on opposition to the social contract for the NDP. Rae has laid the basis for the resurgence of support for the right-wing party with his emphasis on the deficit, half of

which reflects unpaid taxes by corporations. The NDP government's term in office has legitimized the perception of the most backward workers of the inevitability of class rule. This has generated wide-spread cynicism. Such cynicism expresses itself in lesser evil politics which is the basis for the NDP intervention in the campaign. It has also led to a right-wing populism however. This populism targets identifiable enemies. People are looking for somebody to blame. They are looking for solutions. They did not get it from the left and they are now turning to the right. The result is inward-turned hostility which dominates the election, will determine its results and which has wiped out any significance to the NDP's minor reforms while in office. White spoke out only for himself and not the CLC when he identified with a vote for the ONDP. Nobody will really care whether we as a group or individuals vote for the NDP or decline our ballots.

John pointed out that the NDP will hold on to its base and that we were wrong to abstain during one of the election campaigns in Quebec instead of supporting the PQ. Harry said that a vote for the NDP did not have any strategic significance in this election. However, many unemployed and welfare people (1.3 million people in Ontario are on welfare) may vote NDP, some for the first time, to stop the proposed cut-backs by the Tories in social services. There was a general sense that we should vote for the NDP when that vote was meaningful but that it was not a critical issue.

Overall, the NDP has left the electorate confused. The labour movement has not distanced itself enough from the NDP government's policies and the government itself to draw a clearer line and mobilize the class around an alternative. There continues to be acrimony within the labour movement, differences and confusion. The Party itself exists only as a machine around the Rae leadership. While we understand the difference between Rae and the NDP, it is an open question whether significant layers of others share such an understanding or will vote for the NDP on the basis of such an understanding and distinction.

NEW BUSINESS:

Lois reported that the economic nationalist group called ~~Comar~~ COMER who she knows some contacts in have supported the idea that the World Back should create a common currency for the United States and Canada as part of the breaking down of the tariff walls. This would eliminate the need for a Bank of Canada. Gord said the idea was crazy.

Calendar read and meeting adjourned circa 10:35 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING

August 22, 1995

Meeting commenced at 8:30 p.m.

Chair: John Glenn

Attendance: John Glenn, John Darling, Lois Bedard, Harry Kopyto, Gord Doctorow

Away without explanation: Joe Steinbok

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:

MOTION CARRIED to postpone adoption to next meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE:

John Darling reported on a letter from Jerry Houle regarding the NDP and the Freedom Socialist Party. Lois Bedard reported on contact with Ruth Morris.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

Fred is quite ill with a malignant growth in his throat that has gotten into his bones and spine. His illness is terminal and he is being rendered slowly immobile. Comrades should visit him as much as possible as he is quite politically alert and wants to discuss with comrades.

Barry Weisleder contacted us with respect to a memorial meeting September 10th for Mandel. We should protest the apparent exclusion of Socialist Challenge from participating in the meeting and insist on being able to present our own view from the front. The structure of the meeting clearly shows that participation and speakers were not decided collectively with others outside of Barry's group.

NDP:

There was a general discussion about the Ontario NDP. Harry pointed out how confirmed election results showed a lower rate of voter participation in working class ridings and a higher rate in petit bourgeois ridings and wealthy ridings. He pointed out that

not much has changed in the NDP, that Rae was speculating about an alliance with the Liberal Party raising the spectre of the ONDP dissolving itself and the lack of vitality inside the NDP. Lois reported on her riding association meeting which showed some life and considerable support of left forces for Robinson, reported on critical comments being made at the last Provincial Council meeting despite the expulsions of Weisleder, Liz Barclay and Elizabeth Byce and a high level of activism around social issues by the labour movement and Metro Labour Council. Harry reported on all the key labour leaders (Ryan, Casselman and Hargrove) writing letters to Rae opposing the expulsions. It was also pointed out that there were pockets of left activity around Arlene Rousseau in Windsor, etc. The NDP was not wiped out in the election campaign and retains the allegiance of a considerable portion of the working class. However, politically the leadership is drifting further to the right.

We should protest publicly and strongly the idea of a coalition with the Liberal Party. We should defend the NDP as an independent Party. The NDP is in a contradictory situation. The only real alternative since it has moved so far to the right is for it to swing to the left now. We need a simple, clear, direct intervention calling for the movement to be rebuilt around simple slogans and ideas raising economic issues including taxing the banks, etc. We want a broad left pro-labour appeal through a statement of renewal.

As far as the Federal convention is concerned we should generally support Svend who has taken a clear stand on social issues and also called for taxing the banks. Alexa McDonaough seems to have the support of the labour brass, steel anyway, and the professional Party apparatus, especially in Ontario. Nystrom has a regional west base which Svend Robinson will likely overtake and emerge as the left alternative to McDonaough. Hardin will appeal to a few disaffected radicals and does not have a clear pro-labour focus. We should support Robinson but intervene at the Federal convention in Ottawa in October with an Educational leaflet, possibly to be put out by the Left Caucus talking about the contradictory situation that the NDP is in. There will be a feeling of anticipation at the NDP and left forces will be mobilized around Svend. We should definitely encourage comrades to be present.

MOTION CARRIED to draft leaflets to be presented at our next branch meeting Thursday, September 7, 1995 to be presented at the Provincial Council meeting in Toronto in September as well as at the upcoming Federal convention. Harry to draft.

CODINA/KOPYTO DEFENCE:

Angie has been committed to trial on the Legal Aid fraud charge but is making a Motion to quash her committal in the hopes of blocking the trial from proceeding. Her Application for Leave to Appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada with respect to the immigration fraud case is still outstanding.

Harry has applied for Leave to Appeal from his disbarment in the Supreme Court of Canada. If he does not succeed, he will apply to be readmitted on the basis of passage of time and rely on some new support that he has received from the Women's and Labour Movements through contacts and legal work that he has been doing over the years.

EDUCATIONAL:

There was a general discussion about Quebec. Harry expressed concern that the Quebec sovereigntists may not succeed because it has failed to flesh its program with clear social and economic demands. Gord pointed out that the momentum was with the sovereigntist movement, that Bouchard was showing important leadership qualities and that the federalist forces were clearly divided with Johnson and Chretien at loggerheads over constitutional reform. Efforts to mobilize extra-territorial Quebecois to vote as well as the contradiction posed by the aboriginal nations complicated the situation however.

It was also pointed out in the discussion that the dynamic of the struggle has yet to unfold once the referendum has been called. The pro-sovereignty association coalition appears to be in control and the post-summer events will likely play into its hands. Parizeau has yielded to a broader leadership less impulsive than he is and more unified. While there is uncertainty as to the results, dissatisfaction with cutbacks from the Federal government and the uninspiring image of an anglophone Canada dominated by the U.S. along with a clear exposition of a sovereignty association position make success in the referendum a real possibility.

Calendar was read and meeting adjourned circa 10:40 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING

September 21, 1995

Meeting commenced at 8:20 p.m.

Present: Joe Steinbok, John Darling, Gord Doctorow
Lois Bedard, Harry Kopyto, John Glenn

MINUTES:

MOTION CARRIED to adopt minutes of the last two meetings mailed to the comrades.

MOTION CARRIED to adopt minutes of September 7, 1995.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Report on correspondence from Art Gray by John Darling.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

Leo Panitch was open to discussion with respect to a series on Mandel or having the theme of Mandel's contributions. Lois Bedard spoke to him after the Mandel memorial meeting.

Fred Callahan is not receiving any treatment except palliative. He is expected to go to Grace Hospital in only a few months. He is clear-headed but immobile. Comrades should visit him. He is interested in keeping abreast of political developments.

MOVED AND CARRIED that the Forward Group organize a celebration of the Russian Revolution on November 7th at the Hospital where Fred is residing.

EDUCATIONAL:

Harry gave a talk on Native legal concepts incorporating references to various points including the following:

--Native people had only a temporary, limited concept of ownership of land;

--this concept revolved around the ability to use the land and was called Usufructuary Rights;

--such rights did not give exclusive ownership of land to anyone;

--all land was held in common and whoever was not using it could not deny somebody else the right to use it;

--this concept also applied to all other forms of property except personal property;

--Native religions like other primitive religions animistic. To the extent that Mother Earth belongs to anyone it belongs to the souls of the departed;

--for historical reasons other legal constructs such as the evolution of ownership by conquest or by occupation have been rejected by courts as the basis for settling land claims in favour of concepts of contract and exchange;

--these concepts however impose the legal fiction that Natives alienated land to Western conquerors freely;

--this could clearly not be the case. In addition, the concept of "meeting of the minds" which is essential to enforcement of a contract has no application when the native legal system does not encompass concepts of exclusive ownership and alienation;

--the position taken by Bruce Clark and some Native militants relies heavily on a 1704 Massachusetts case which acknowledged that Western courts could not adjudicate impartially on land claims;

--this reality reinforces arguments that the judicial system constitutes a fraud on and is treasonous to the Native communities but such harsh formulations do not lead to any defensive strategies that can gain widespread acceptance, even among Natives given the weak state of the movement;

--a corollary of this argument is that the Queen of England retains residual trust authority to recognize and enforce Native land claim rights. A political strategy arising out of this formulation internationalizes the struggle but does little to the process of developing a strategy to deal with the Canadian judicial system on this issue;

--the alternative legal strategy based on contractual concepts is more defensive, is in accord with the present law that recognizes the divisibility of the Crown, forces the courts to deal with whether or not their own principles have been violated by the Canadian Government and can result in partial gains and victories in the Canadian context;

--unless and until the Native communities unify and develop a cohesive strategy, a point which is quite distant at present given the divisive state of their leadership and a significant co-option of it in the negotiations industry, the latter strategy would appear to be more practical and efficacious.

John Darling criticized the Educational for being deficient in failing to assess the present condition and alternatives before the

Native community as a whole and in particular the significance of the militancy shown by Natives in Ipperwash, Gustasfson Lake and Quebec. He dismissed Clark as guilty of "ridiculous posturing" and marginal. It was pointed out in the discussion as well that the Berger Commission reinforced Native concepts of self-government as a powerful and urgent matter showing the possibility of influencing non-Native thought on the land claims issues.

Gord situated the crisis of the Native struggle in the context of the Americanization of the Canadian state, the increasingly transparent role of state institutions as super-structures to reinforce capital exploitation and the shattering of traditional power brokerage relationships. With the Native community lacking a unified, focused and militant leadership, the programmatic positions of Native leaders have failed to develop a rounded program for Native self-government leaving the movement open to co-option, municipalization of reserves and the kind of confusion that resulted in George Erasmus supporting the RCMP invasion of Kanasatake.

MOTION CARRIED to have the next Educational focus on the new and changing role of the Canadian state.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

John Darling gave a report.

NDP:

Harry read a much reduced draft of a leaflet to be circulated at the Provincial Council meeting.

MOTION CARRIED to promote the basic line of the leaflet.

There was a further discussion about the leadership issue at the federal convention. Gord pointed out that if Svend Robinson is not elected as the leader of the NDP, it would make it irrelevant. He pointed out the confused state of some of the sections of the NDP that were backing McDonagh such as Steve Langdon. He suggested that the convention next month would raise expectations and that the only place left for the NDP to go is to the left. He pointed out that most of the leadership candidates were leaning to the left in their campaigns. A draft of a proposed Left Caucus leaflet will be presented at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION CARRIED to give John Darling a leave of absence of three weeks.

Calendar read and meeting adjourned circa 10:30 p.m.

Found in Sept('95) — author?

MANITOBA ELECTION '96

The laws of the class struggle are still very much valid. The results of the Manitoba provincial election had some interesting lessons that may be helpful in the present discussion that is going on throughout the left in Canada.

In the first place we need to understand the class nature of the Province and how the NDP was able to get elected in the past. One could draw a line horizontally through the province just north of Winnipeg and everything above that line has always been NDP. That still is only seven ridings out of fifty-seven and is for the most part aboriginal populated.

Below the line excluding the cities of Winnipeg and Brandon is Tory and for the most part always has been. The swing ridings are always in the cities and the key to whether they go NDP or Tory is the strength of the Liberals. It is as simple as that. The NDP has a base constituency that is really quit small. The riding associations are almost non-existant and the campaigns have nothing on those of Ontario. The campaign is mainly fought through the media.

In this election the class lines were drawn very sharply. the Filmon government has been moving steadily to the right as most bourgeios governments are doing across the country. The number of poor is increasing dramatically and there is a real fear of the detioration of living standards.

As for the Liberals, they were saddled with an inept leader and the party is split between those who are the Axworthy supporters and the old Carstairs team. On top of that the number of civil servants are an important factor in the political life of Winnipeg and the cutbacks of the Ottawa government destroyed any credibility that the Liberals might have had within the middle class.

The NDP campaign was run on the one issue of health care and they would not be shaken from that issue. It was obvious to me that Doer was convinced that he could never acheive power and the whole campaign was designed around hanging on to the status quo.

The three ridings that the NDP took from the Liberals were mainly working class and they were able to mobilize that class vote for themselves. Nevertheless as long as the Liberals are in office in Ottawa and continue to do the dirty work of the ruling class the NDP will never win power in this province unless it develops a clear anti-capitalist program and presents itself as the alternative which is most unlikely.

In the long run while people talk a lot about the betrayals of the NDP in Ontario and the rest of Canada. when the chips are down and it is a straight confrontation between the classes the NDP is the choice of the oppressed.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING

April 30, 1996

Meeting convened at 8:30 p.m.

Chairperson: John Glenn

Present: John Glenn, John Darling, Gord Doctorow, Harry Kopyto

Away with reason: Lois (Joe Steinbok phoned in later to tell us that he was also away with reason)

MINUTES:

MOTION CARRIED to adopt minutes of meeting of April 16, 1996.

CORRESPONDENCE:

There was discussion of the draft letter to Harry Paine.

MOTION CARRIED to rewrite it and mail it to the comrades for final approval at the next meeting.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

Gord mentioned information regarding Barb Marcereau who was involved in a liberal-reformist disability project in Hamilton though she was a former steering member of the Left Caucus and consistently supported the Left. The point was made that in this period, radical activists are still involved in various mass movements and issues but that in the absence of the NDP as a focus for the left politically, activists are not coming together to unify and focus their attention politically. To the extent that this reflects a disorientation and demobilization of the revolutionary left, the limited success of the labour day of protest in Waterloo also reflects the same problem. Though the days of protest indicate profound dissatisfaction among large numbers of people, a series of militant actions on their own in the absence of a political focus cannot carry through to a higher level of political consciousness. Such mobilizations, even when they are broad and reflect deep anger, occupy only "limited space". They flare up and die. Ultimately in the absence of political coordination, they cannot feed into a larger project. Clearly they cannot resolve the crisis in the NDP though the ultimate

contradiction of Gord Wilson leading mass militant marches and making radical declarations while supporting the most backward anti-labour elements in the NDP is central to the problem.

EDUCATIONAL:

There was a general discussion about the economic situation, the U.S. recovery and the longevity of the current capitalist ongoing period of expansion. Gord pointed out that capitalism still embodies contradictions of the falling rate of profit. He pointed out that the system remains more delicately balanced than at any other time in the recent past because of the limited market still available for the sale of goods. Overproduction remains a critical problem. Because of the central importance of the U.S. economy as a market for world goods, there is limited interest in undermining it by the world bourgeoisie. However, the contradictions of growing unemployment and limited markets remain objective hindrances that will sooner or later catch up with capitalism.

There was also a discussion about the continuing, ongoing political instability in Canada since the referendum defeat of the Meech constitution and the continued de-sanctification of bourgeois politics and breakup of the traditional political and voting patterns. This is especially obvious in the current crisis that the Liberal Party is experiencing in finding a leader. All the able, established and prominent candidates have refused to run reflecting the absence of credible bourgeois politicians.

KOPYTO/CODINA:

Angie continues to face outstanding charges. The Law Society laid a new complaint against her in an effort to circumvent her blocking of the other complaints.

NEW BUSINESS:

Calendar was read and the meeting adjourned circa 10:45 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING

June 18, 1996

Meeting commenced at 8:30 p.m.

Chair: John Glenn

ATTENDANCE:

Present: John D., John G. Lois B., Harry, K., Joe S., Gord D.

MINUTES:

Minutes of the last formal meeting had previously been adopted.

CORRESPONDENCE:

John Darling reported on a letter from Jerry Houle. This led to a discussion of the B.C. election results. It was a clear class campaign and the NDP was able to establish an unprecedented back-to-back two-term reign of government. The results contrast sharply with the disaster which followed the right-wing drift of the NDP leadership in Ontario.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

Helen and Lloyd were in town recently. It seems that Elsa has prevented Dave from being able to maintain contact with Vern's doctors since Vern was hospitalized recently. Helen and Lloyd seemed to be supportive of Dave. Jan is likely to encourage Dave to re-establish access to the doctors.

NDP:

There was a discussion of the results of the NDP in the by-election in Hamilton-East. The percentage of the vote went from 16% to 30%. The Liberals declined from 67% to 50%. The NDP candidate, who was the key organizer of the Hamilton march of 125,000 people, won back the labour vote for the NDP. This was a major lost opportunity for Alexa McDonah to raise the profile of the party. Mulroney and other establishment politicians travel around the country to get elected. McDonah's lack of profile is proving fatal to the federal NDP.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the Kormos campaign. It was generally agreed that he represents more of a challenge to the membership in the constituency associations than to the Party establishment which, at this time, is firmly in control of the convention and Party apparatus. It was further agreed that the Party is probably in worse shape now than it was at or before the time of the election.

The divisions between Hampton and Lankin reflect different power bases within the trade union bureaucracy with Hampton representing a more conservative strain and the steelworkers effectively being the power behind Lankin. Whatever their differences, they are insignificant compared to the real challenge before the Party to build an ongoing structured left. In this respect, the current moribund state of the Party reflects the dead end of the adaptationist policies of Heap, McPherson and others who, whatever their good intentions and illusions, proved their political ignorance by opposing the existence of the Left Caucus and its ongoing organized intervention. Kormos' spirit of solidarity, openness, all-inclusiveness and commitment to principle has gone beyond a mere commitment to the reform program that the NDP ran on provincially in 1989. His deepening analysis and desire to take the NDP back to its roots goes beyond a serious defence of the Party program; it shows his understanding of the need to take the Party back to its roots and build it as a movement on socialist lines.

There will be tremendous pressure on Kormos to unite behind the new leader. He must resist this. He must make it very clear that such an identity would mean capitulating to the backwardness of the Party's adaptationism. It is critical that he not throw his support behind any of the other candidates but that he stand apart on a clear, programmatic difference.

MOTION CARRIED to have Lois/Joyce approach him in this regard as they have played a role in his campaign and have greater credibility in so advising him.

Harry explained that there was not enough time or structure in order to get out the Left Caucus-initiated leaflet endorsing Kormos.

Lois also gave a report on the NAC-CLC sponsored march in Ottawa which saw approximately 10,000 women in an impressive, enthusiastic demonstration which heard militant speeches. There were lots of young, working-class women and popular, radical entertainment. The NAC convention unfortunately emphasized the issue of electing a woman of colour to a significance which it did not deserve. Minority women have already become integrated into NAC at the leadership and committee levels and do not face isolation or differential treatment within the organization. Unfortunately, however, the decision by Thobani, the previous NAC leader, to make

the colour of the next president a critical issue obfuscated the need to have programmatic clarity and a strategy for effective action as the critical criteria in determining who should be leaders. It was suggested that the issue could have been resolved more effectively by having two co-chairpersons. In any event, the lengthy history of sectarianism by some Black female activists and the guilt-tripping and baiting which drove out people like Callwood and others from NAC and which even Rebick countenanced, gave rise to a dangerously sectarian and self-absorbed promotion of issues of colour above political direction. In this sense, NAC is in danger of factional disintegration and is far from assured a central role in coming political events.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

John Darling reported that we had $2,113.00 in our treasury.

MOTION CARRIED that comrades' dues be collected on a regular basis and that comrades recommence paying dues following the summer period and the return of John Darling to his position as treasurer in November.

MOTION CARRIED to elect Gord Doctorow as treasurer until John Darling's return.

KOPYTO/CODINA DEFENCE COMMITTEE:

The Law Society has pulled together several clients' complaints against Angie and charged her with professional misconduct. The hearings are scheduled for August 19th. Harry Kopyto's attempt to represent her has been challenged by the Law Society which has scheduled July 16/17 as a hearing date to determine whether he is competent to represent her. The Law Society is relying on the fact that his disbarment has established his incompetence. Harry's strategy is to challenge the Law Society's position as discriminatory and biased against him as his disbarment merely disqualifies him as a lawyer, not as an agent.

MOTION CARRIED to endorse this strategy.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION CARRIED to have the next meeting on July 9th to avoid the long weekend.

Meeting adjourned at circa 10:30 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING

September 4, 1996

Meeting commenced 9:00 p.m.

Present: Gord, Harry, Joe

Away with reason: John Glenn, John Darling

Absent: Lois

MINUTES:

MOTION CARRIED to adopt minutes of the last meeting as amended.

CORRESPONDENCE:

We received a letter from lawyers for Laurentian Trust advising that Art Gray left usa a $50,000.00 bequest in his will as well as well as $20,000.00 to Ross and $10,000.00 to John Darling.

MOTION CARRIED to defer discussion to a future meeting as to what use could be made of these funds in part or whole. There was an informal discussion however in which it was canvassed that some of the funds could be used to set up a web site, that we may wish to consider giving a portion to the Fourth International, etc.

A letter was received from John Darling.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

Peter Matelanian is in town for the film festival. He will be meeting Gord on Saturday to discuss his desire to set up a web site on the Internet to exchange and record Canadian Trotskyist material which is in danger of destruction by mildew or decay. There was a general discussion about the importance of preserving some material which is already beginning to become old, illegible or damaged and the importance of being able to make it available to anybody who wishes to do any kind of studies or reviews of our heritage. There was also a discussion regarding the feasibility of using our expected bequest to fund such a project in part or whole and whether to apprise Peter of that fact.

MOTION CARRIED that Gord advise Peter that the Forward Group agrees in principle on the desirability of moving the Trotskyist archives accumulated by us into a web site and that we will discuss details and advise shortly on proposed steps to implement such a project.

MOTION CARRIED also to approach Brian Palmer in order to discuss with him the advisability of computerizing our archives.

The going-away party organized for John Glenn at Harry's place last week was well attended and had a very good atmosphere. Everyone spoke well and perhaps the only criticism that could be made is that we did not make the attendance broader by inviting people like Barry Weisleder.

A commemoration meeting will be held for Art Gray on October 6th at the Socialist Action headquarters. Harry will draft a leaflet and we will mail it to our of contacts.

EDUCATIONAL:

Harry gave a brief report on the founding of the labour party in the United States in Cleveland in early June. 1,450 delegates and observers representing five international unions and 36 labour party branches launched a party but refused to run candidates in this election stating that they did not have the candidates or the apparatus to do so. However, it was agreed that another conference would take place in 2 years' time to prepare candidates for the next election. One million union members were represented by the unions present at the conference. There was quite a bit of criticism of the decision not to run candidates which was justified in part by left bureaucrats at the convention who had a fear that they would alienate potential recruits who supported the Democratic Party and cause a premature division of forces. Some ultra-lefts also criticized the convention for not passing a resolution that simply called for abortion on demand though a resolution calling for full control of reproductive rights by women on the basis of a universal health scheme was overwhelmingly endorsed.

KOPYTO/CODINA DEFENCE:

Harry was barred from representing Angie and she is judicially reviewing the decision. Angie proceeded on August 19th with the Law Society discipline hearing. She launched an initial motion to freeze the proceedings because they are an abuse of process. She compiled an outline of the history of her harassment since 1984 and the hearing was adjourned for further evidence for a hearing one week in October, one week in November and one week in December. She is doing very well. Lois has attended some of the hearings. She has been given a rough time by the panel but is carrying ahead representing herself.

Unfortunately, she decided not to appear on Pauline Au's behalf on at the September 4th hearing which would have benefited her in terms of getting public attention and support in her Law Society proceedings.

NEW BUSINESS:

Gord reported on the labour parade that it was large and militant and contained a large multi-national contingent as well. There was no organized NDP presence in the parade though Julie Davis, Wayne Samuelson, Bob White and Frances Lankin were present in other capacities. There was a strong atmosphere of solidarity and the parade reflected an ongoing militancy within the labour movement. The themes included support for the days of protest and opposition to cutbacks by the Harris government. There was a lot of literature distributed and there was a fairly political atmosphere.

MOTION CARRIED to adjourn circa 10:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING

December 18, 1996

Meeting commenced 8:45 p.m.

Present: Lois, Gord, John Darling, Harry

Away with Reason: John Glenn

Away without Reason: Joe Steinbok

MINUTES:

MOTION CARRIED to adopt minutes of December 4, 1996 meeting as prepared and mailed to comrades.

MOTION CARRIED to have Harry approach Zane Boyd and ask him if he wishes to receive copies of the Forward Group minutes as he basically shares our views and analysis on all questions. Gord explained that Zane is overcoming some personal difficulties but has developed health problems as a result of his previous lifestyle.

CORRESPONDENCE:

John Darling reported on a letter from Jerry Houle regarding the Vancouver municipal situation and his personal situation.

Harry reported that he would be meeting the comrades from the United States on his trip over the next two weeks. He is to give them copies of the Socialist Vanguard and the NDP pamphlet. Gord suggested that it would be inappropriate to attempt to give them tactical advice on the situation that they find themselves in vis-a-vis the labour party. However, he should provide them with some comments which could eventually be worked into a preface to Ross' pamphlet, The Socialist Vanguard and the NDP which would make the following points:

--that this pamphlet and related literature summarizes our lengthy experience with the tactic of entryism into a labour party formation over several decades;

--that we were instrumental in colonizing New Zealand, Australia and England with comrades from Canada who were schooled in applying such a tactic and did so successfully over a period of several decades in these countries;

--it was important that Harry encourage these comrades to review Marx's and Engel's pamphlets on the labour party and other writings by them as part of the overall contribution that we could make to introducing them to our heritage and experience;

--the central point that should be made is that our movement has always seen massive organizations as the place to seed our forces;

--an equally central point is that ultimately our orientation amounted to the application of the transitional program;

--we should not lecture or be didactic in our approach to the comrades but explain to them that our heritage represents our own living experience. We should explain that this is what worked for us and that these pamphlets are not only a product of our own insight but that of Troskyists around the world and therefore it is as much a part of their heritage as it is of ours;

--it is important that our position be explained in terms of enabling the comrades to develop a strategic understanding of their role in the American labour party so that they can develop their tactics on their own. In particular, the basic formulations that we have worked out should be explained not as slogans but as guides which have proved themselves over decade of experience and include the following concepts:

--the need for a labour party to be seen as the expression of independent political action by labour;

--the concept of entering work with a non-specific perspective including having comrades both working externally and within the labour party;

--the concept that the labour is both in the way and on the way;

--the concept of long-term fraction work without a non-split perspective;

--these should be explained as part of the history of the movement as a whole.

--we should also point out to them that ours is not the only view available. They could, for example, look up to Weisleder and his position or that of Michelle Mill and decide for themselves which one they think is best;

--the idea is not to advise them on the tactical situation but to enable them to understand our approach so that they can develop their own approach as well;

--equally important is to explain to them the importance of maintaining an organized left within the labour party. Ultimately, we have concluded that without having an organized left, the party as a whole has currently taken a major step back and is in a state of debacle. The ultimate task of Trotskyists is to be the best builders of the left wing of the labour party and not accept responsibility for building the labour party as a whole. This is to be distinguished however from placing ourselves in critical positions within the class struggle as a whole including working to sign up workers for automatic deductions and check-offs to support the labour party;

--we should point out that the failure to sustain the Left Caucus has led to the right-wing leadership in Ontario proceeding in an unimpeded manner to derail the NDP as a whole.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

John Glenn may come back early from the Philippines. Apparently he is not making that much money and there is no compelling reason for him to stay so that his situation there is somewhat uncertain.

NDP REPORT:

There was a brief discussion introduced by Lois about our perspective that we want to put forward when we meet with Kormos. We have not had an opportunity to meet him yet but expect to be able to do so in the near future. Once again, the emphasis should be on having the NDP organize forums on socialism which would be open to people like Panitch, Laxer, Watkins and Hunnius. The meeting will likely take place in the near future.

ARCHIVES:

Rick Stowe is in touch with Gord and wants to interview him and others regarding doing a biography on a minor C.P figure. There was a general discussion about the importance of having a biography done of Ross Dowson while he is still alive. There was a general sense that Bryan Palmer should do it even though he may have differences with us. He has previously indicated that he would be willing to look over our archival material on short notice. Harry however should contact him and see if he could arrange for meetings to take place some time in January. It would be most preferable to have Bryan stay over in Toronto at our expense and to have two or three meetings with us over a weekend so that we can discuss the project of a biography of Ross with him prior to his writing a broader appreciation of the history of Canadian Trotskyism. Harry will get in touch with him and see how he responds.

NEW BUSINESS:

There was a brief discussion on an article about Joe Hansen's position on Cuba and his statement that Russia was a capitalist state when the Bolsheviks took it over.

It was also suggested that at the next meeting we would have a brief discussion about a magazine being published in Toronto by a group of ex-Trotskyists and others which appears to wish to establish itself as a broad forum. The first issue of "Ginger" was available for the comrades to read.

MOTION CARRIED to have the next meeting on January 8, 1997.

Meeting adjourned circa 11:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING

January 8, 1997

Meeting commenced 8:50 p.m.

Chair: Joe Steinbok

Attendance: Lois, Joe Gord, John Darling, Harry

Absent with Reason: John Glenn

MINUTES:

MOTION CARRIED to adopt minutes of December 18, 1996 meeting subject to extensive corrections in the section on the NDP. Apparently, the minutes went out without being corrected or reviewed. In addition, John Darling submitted a summary which elaborated his comments on Hansen's position on Cuba. A copy of this correction should be attached and made available with the minutes of this meeting.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

Harry mentioned running into Ron Hendrix seconded by the CAW to assist him in his presentation of the Au case. A young, educated worker militant presently disillusioned with the NDP, he symbolizes many people who are standing aside from the NDP these days and who sees no perspective for the Party.

Harry also reported on a discussion with Cliff Orchard in which he showed illusions about Hampton being different from Rae.

Finally, there was report on a meeting with Carl Finamore, a San Francisco comrade who has adopted a workerist position on the labour party question symbolizing the isolation and division within the revolutionary left in the United States.

Harry left copies of our transitional program and pamphlets with both the L.A. comrades as well as Carl.

DISCUSSION ON THE NDP:

There was a general discussion about the megacity project for Toronto. It was pointed out that the Tories were divided on the question and that some NDPers were supporting amalgamation (Olivia Chow) while others were opposed to it. The whole tendency of amalgamation and unification of urban areas reflects the ongoing restructuring of government necessitated by the advantageous position being sought by capital during a period of intensification of world trade. Just as national and other governments are being weakened in order to permit more rational and profit-oriented production, so also cities and restrictions on businesses imposed by city governments are being restructured to facilitate production as well. It is in this context that the proposal in the Toronto area has to be considered. The fact that it has been designated as a megacity does not really make it so. Cities on the scale of New York are more appropriately called megacities.

It is to be noted that the massive trends towards urbanization in the third world in which rural and urban poor are concentrated in barrios represents a degree of impoverization that cannot be thrust on the advanced, industrial world. However, the political significance of what is happening involves a destruction of the infrastructure built up over several years in the cities by Kinseyian strategy and investments in order to enable capital expansion on a vastly qualitatively more accelerated scale. Ultimately our position, while generally in favour of internationalization of government including world government and therefore generally in favour of government administrative bodies encompassing larger units of area and people from the point of view of global planning is to raise the fundamental social questions as to why these proposals are being made now, whose interest do they serve and finally most importantly, what guarantees there would be that there would not be an undermining of existing facilities and the possibility of expanding them. We should therefore, as a condition of supporting the GTA, raise issues such as the following: what guarantee will there by that public schools will not be weakened, their funding won't be weakened and all the existing social services and programs will be maintained including women's shelters, welfare funding, transportation systems, etc.

Until there is a real plan to meet the interests of people with a binding referendum including all the persons affected in the living area where the city will be expanded to, it will be impossible for us to support the idea of amalgamation. We would therefore tactically vote against it as it is proposed at present and demand a concrete plan including social guarantees to be approved before any changes take place.

KOPYTO/CODINA:

Harry reported on current financial difficulties.

Angie is continuing to fight the Law Society on her own and has yet to publish an outline of the harassment which she has suffered.

NEW BUSINESS:

Lois reported on the dramatic decline in Ruth's health.

Meeting adjourned circa 10:50 p.m.

Minutes subject to approval

enclosure: John Darling's note re Hansen's position on Cuba

fgmin18d
forward group minutes dec 18/96

correx

ref Hansen's position on Cuba

It was noted that BIDOM* has produced the first issue of a large new theoretical journal "Revolutionary Marxism Today" and that the next issue will feature an article "What can go wrong with labor parties: Canada and Britain." Of interest in the first issue is an article entitled "Joseph Hansen and the Marxist Theory of the State: A Dual Legacy" which notes the important contribution Hansen made in characterizing the Soviet Union as a "degenerated workers' state" and the Eastern European countries brought under the influence of Stalinism after World War 2 as "deformed workers' states." Hansen also played a role in determining the socialist nature of the Cuban Revolution despite the petty-bourgeois leadership of the July 26 Movement, characterizing the Castroites as "revolutionists of action."

However in the process of doing so he projected the Cuban reality on the past Russian experience, revising the fundamental criteria of determining exactly what made the Bolshevik Revolution socialist, i.e., stating in 1961 that "the smashing of bourgeois property relations is the primary criterion in determining the character of the state in every instance." The author Jim Miles counters: "Hansen is wrong...(this) was NOT the 'primary criteria' ...in that instance it was politically determined as a workers' state due to 1) smashing the Czarist bourgeois state apparatus, 2) under the leadership of the Marxist political program of the Bolsheviks and... 3) replacement of new organs of the workers state, the workers' councils (soviets) and the workers' militia. This revision led Hansen to state the Bolsheviks "took over" the capitalist state, leading SWP leader Barnes an open door to revise and later reject Trotskyism and the Theory of the Permanent Revolution. (Part Two of this article appears in the next issue.)

* Bulletin In Defence Of Marxism (split-off from SWP-USA) + expellees

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING

January 29, 1997

Meeting commenced 8:45 p.m.

Chair: Joe Steinbok

Attendance: Gord, John Darling, Joe, Harry

Absent with Reason: Lois

MINUTES:

MOTION CARRIED to adopt minutes of last meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Harry reported that the money from Art Gray's estate will be coming in, in a few days since the securities were sold.

John Darling read a letter from Gerry Houle in which he indicated a number of interesting things including the fact that now a minority of the Fourth International adheres to the principles of democratic centralism.

Harry reported on two letters from John Glenn including one from a British contact of his that talked about the decline in the Militant Group and the rise of the SWP (state caps).

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

Harry reported on the death of Chris Thurrot from a massive heart attack on Monday, January 27th. A memorial meeting will be held at the Plumbers' Union Hall next Friday. Chris had joined the movement after coming in from eastern Canada with Daryl, Harry Stone and Jeff Levits in the 1980's. He went back and subsequently returned to Toronto becoming a coordinator for the Building Trades Council. He had never forsaken his politics though worked alone and was in solidarity with the Trotskyist left.

Lois jointed the meeting by phone and informed us about arrangements for Ruth's funeral. Her death had been expected.

Harry also reported on Bryan Palmer getting in touch with us and saying that he would not have a weekend available in March as he had academic commitments before then that prevented him from attending to review our archival material.

We received a call from Bryan Palmer who said he would be available this coming weekend to review the documents in our archives. Otherwise he would have to wait until March because of additional teaching obligations that he has. It is obvious that no one will be available to assist him this Saturday in light of the current situation with Ruth's death. (Note: He called a few days after the meeting and was told of the situation.)

Harry also reported on the broad support from women and labour that Pauline Au was receiving and the high profile given to Harry by her case. (See some of the photocopies of articles enclosed).

FINANCIAL REPORT:

No details available.

EDUCATIONAL:

Gord Doctorow led off a general discussion about the direction of our meetings. It was suggested that it would be a good idea to restructure our meetings away from regular discussions of the NDP when it wasn't a real arena for activity and there was no other active work area that was highly beneficial and amounted to having significance to us as an organized group. There are a number of other matters which we could focus on at our meetings which would be useful in enabling us to take some concrete steps that will make the use of our time more meaningful. As we were not really intervening in any areas from which we could recruit and not engaged in movement-building activities, there was no need to have abstract discussions about areas of work where nothing was happening. We might more concretely focus in on a variety of different topics that would be relevant to the current situation. We could, for example, focus in on organizing our archival material and making decisions as to what should be preserved and what should be discarded.

John Darling also suggested that it would be very useful to use our meetings to organize our archival material or identify different areas or topics for discussion. He had done some very valuable work in beginning to present an index to some of our archival documents. John suggested that we could organize the Left Caucus material in such a way that it could be useful to assist us in providing and sharing our experiences to the American comrades. The same could be said about the articles that we had in our one issue of the Bulletin of the Forward Group and also suggested that Harry's 70 page series of educational presentations

around various transitional issues could be polished up into becoming a pamphlet and was a very useful collection of our analyses.

It was pointed out in the discussion that we could probably start pulling together a lot of critical material on the labour party question in particular including material which we had such as Marx and Engels on the labour party, material which the Spartacist Group appears to have kept (it was mentioned that they had an article by Ross that none of us was aware of) and other documents.

This part of the discussion focused on how the current situation expressed a lack of leadership in the revolutionary movement as a whole and the importance of maintaining our traditions and outlook going back to the LSA and SWP in North America. By bringing the documents together, we could maintain an ongoing discussion as to what was important and relevant.

It was decided that at the next meeting, Gord would pull together Left Caucus Bulletins and we can go over what we want to see and what use we may wish to make of them.

NDP:

No report.

KOPYTO/CODINA:

Angie was found guilty following a trial before a middle-class jury by a sophisticated judge judge who told the Crown to tighten the case up against her. Sentencing will be on February 24th and Angie is mobilizing a large number of witnesses to speak on her behalf.

Calendar was read and meeting adjourned circa 10:15 p.m.

Minutes subject to approval.

enclosures: newspaper clips

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING

June 25, 1997

Meeting convened circa 9:15 p.m.

Present: **Gord, Lois, Joe, Harry**

Away with Reason: **John Darling, John Glenn**

MINUTES:

Minutes of the previous meeting, where Mike and Chuck were invited to attend and which consisted of a general discussion about the election campaign, were read.

MOTION CARRIED to continue the discusion at the present limited.

EDUCATIONAL DISCUSSION:

The meeting consisted of an educational discussion and an abbreviated agenda. Gord commented on John Darling's summary of the discussion we had at the last Branch meeting regarding the election results. Essentially, the point was made that it could not be said that the election results were a victory for the right. While Reform did increase its support marginally by 3%, the majority of workers in Canada voted against it including in Ontario where the Liberal Party was able to garner a significant vote at the expense of the NDP, much of which reflected antipathy to the Reform Party and a desire to keep it from establishing a foothold in Ontario. Nor can it be said that the vote for the Reform Party promised it a long-term commitment from workers who still voted for it as a populist protest in many areas, especially in British Columbia and in parts of Ontario, because the other Parties, Liberals, Tories and NDP, were so closely identified with the political elites since the Charlottetown Accord.

Gord expressed the view that even if the NDP had run on a more militant program, as John suggested it should have and we all agreed, it may not have made a major difference in the election results. The world economic marketplace has tended to limit very strongly the perspective of Canadian workers as to the options before them. The election results reflected their division and confusion. This objective situation would likely have resulted in results which would not have been significantly different in any event. In addition, both at the beginning of her campaign as well as in the Maritimes, McDonough did emphasize taxing the rich and gave a class character to her campaign. If the NDP had taken a principled position on the Quebec question, it is unlikely that its electoral results would have

been substantially different. In this regard, note should be taken of the fact that the NDP's vote increased from 6% to 11% not 9% to 11% as John mistakenly notes. This at least put the NDP back on the political map and gave it official status and resulted from the united backing the NDP received from the labour movement.

Nor can John be considered entirely accurate in designating the vote for the Liberal Party as a right-wing vote. While clearly implementing a right-wing policy, the Liberal Party emphasized that it would re-invest surplus funds to the extent of 50% in social programs after the deficit problem had been solved. In addition, the Conservative Party, far from running a purely right-wing campaign, in fact played it to the left on several occasions. During the latter half of the campaign, Charest, who ran a one-person show, put heavy emphasis on expanding and defending Medicare against the Ontario onslaught on the system and attacking the Liberal Party's move to the right.

Olivia Chow, for example, considers herself having been defeated by a desire of the voters to elect the Liberal Party in opposition to the right-wing drift of the Harris Government. In Ontario, the Liberal vote also reflected generally a disdain for the PC Government and a desire to block the right-wing drift of Harris. While there was no unanimity on this point, the majority of the comrades felt that if Provincial elections were held now, it is far from a foregone conclusion that the Tories would be re-elected and a significant vote would go to the Liberal Party. Indeed, such elections could take place at Lois' suggestion as early as a year from now rather than in two years when the mandate has run out.

It was pointed out in the discussion that in the Maritimes under pressure from local labour leaders, the NDP did come across as a clearly class force. In Quebec where spoiled ballots (130,000) were the highest across Canada and where the percentage of voters went down the greatest, as John points out, this reflected many traditional voters deciding to sit the election out. It was pointed out that many traditional NDP voters felt totally uninspired in the ridings to go out and vote and did so at most in a casual and perfunctory fashion. Indeed, except for a few ridings, the NDP's campaigns were merely symbolic and could not be considered to constitute serious campaigns.

There was a general sense in the discussion that we would now see an acceleration of economic struggles. The OFL is having an emergency convention at the end of July in order to combat the proposed legislation by the Ontario Government undermining the integrity of teachers' unions and public service workers' unions in the upcoming re-structuring processes taking place on the municipal level and across the Province with school Boards.

It was pointed out in the discussion that while the Tories were successful in being able to isolate certain vulnerable constituencies--the poor on welfare, tenants, women, etc., a massive attack on several sectors of the working class, representing hundreds of thousands of workers simultaneously, is likely to draw a united protest from the labour movement which could take on a Province-wide character. It is far from a foregone conclusion that the Tories will necessarily want to face such a confrontation as they have in some respects made

concessions already in light of massive opposition--for example, with respect to implementing their changes to the educational system. The coming period is likely to see an acceleration of economic struggles and heated battles involving larger numbers of workers rather than a resurgence of the NDP as the labour movement still remains divided on the political question while bogged down in internecine and petty conflicts. Also, the NDP has not become a real all-inclusive party of minorities and a voice for all those suffering discrimination. In this regard, John's premonition that the locus of the class struggle will be outside of the NDP in the coming period is likely to be proven accurate though eventually such an acceleration of the class struggle will raise the political question of a labour party again.

The meeting lasted until after 11:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING
Held on November 19, 1997
Meeting Commenced at 8.25 p.m.

Chair: John Darling

Attendance: John Glenn, Lois, Harry, Gord and Joe

MINUTES:

Motion carried to postpone reading of minutes to next meeting.

BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF MINUTES:

No report.

CORRESPONDENCE:

No report.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

No report.

EDUCATIONAL:

Harry presented an outline of two pamphlets produced by the movement in 1968 and in 1973 dealing with Canada/U.S. relations. These included resolutions passed at conventions and articles in the Workers Vanguard which initially outlined our position on the growth of a new nationalism. The following observations were made by Harry with respect to the validity of these positions:

1. That essentially, the analysis presented in the pamphlets is correct and is even proficient and shows greater insight now than at the time they were written.

2. That nationalism in the Canadian context has emerged as part and parcel of a consciousness defending the interests of the Canadian working people.

3. That in its current form, it has molded with a populism which expresses itself as a rebellion against elite.

4. That superimposed upon the anti-U.S. imperialist consciousness which originally gave this new Canadian nationalism birth is an awareness that the heights of the Canadian economy are also owned by U.S. companies and, therefore, this new Canadian nationalism has a deeper and sharper radical edge because it identifies our continentalist elites with their U.S. masters.

5. That the direction of Canadian nationalism continues to be definitely left-wing as visualized by the plethora of movements around Barlow and Orchard as well as Clark's recent confrontation with the U.S. over salmon fishing and NORAD testing.

6. That the Canadian intelligentsia yet definitely reflects a nationalist sentiment about Canadian culture that rejects U.S. domination and continues to give a radical edge to its consciousness.

7. Another sign of the anti-capitalist dynamic of Canadian nationalist consciousness is that it does not mobilize any consistent movement against Quebec, does not reflect chauvinism, and the chauvinism that does exist in Canada around the Reform Party and other groups tend to be disparate and centered in some western provinces.

8. That the Canadian state continues to be highly centeralised and a willing junior partner of U.S. imperialism with its Americanizing role causing it to continue to lose credibility, especially with respect to parliamentary institutions and especially in Quebec.

9. The Canadian bourgeoisie is more integrated than ever into U.S. satellitic domination with more than 80% of trade volume going to the United States and with Canada integrating itself into the world economic market only through its U.S. dominator rather than as an independent capitalist state.

10. The FTA and NAFTA continue to harmonize the economy of the two countries with Canadian getting the short end of the stick and the United States more imperious that it was in the 1950s and 60s in its dealings with Canada making a mockery of any concepts of equality or protecting Canadian interests in the context of NAFTA and the FTA and soon the MIA.

11. Those sections of the Canadian economy traditionally considered reflecting an indigenous Canadian capitalist class are weaker than ever before with the banking section particularly being absorbed by U.S. capital—visualised the Bank of Montreal and CitiBank this week. The Canadian bourgeoisie is becoming weaker not stronger in relation to its U.S. partners.

12. It is still clearly politically necessary to call for an independent socialist Canadian state; this concept retains an overall validity and gives the

cause for socialism a specific Canadian content and anti-U.S. imperialist, anti-capitalist dynamic.

13. The centripetal forces of the U.S. economy, while distorting economic relations in a north-south direction in some instances overall still permit Canadian capitalism to develop in an east-west direction. The economic pulls from the U.S. still distort an economy designed to produce for Canadians, especially in Quebec and aggravates structural defects such as unemployment and branch plant economies.

14. The centripetal forces and continental integration of the Canadian economy has intensified regional poverty and imbalances in the Canadian economy.

15. The Canadian ruling class continues to show a weaker, sometimes totally absent desire to protect the interests of the Canadian population with respect to traditional areas where one expects bourgeois states to assert national interest—that is, in the waterways, environmental areas, etc.

16. The Canadian state continues to play a helpful role for U.S. imperialism in various places in the globe in Haiti, ex-Yugoslavia and Somalia. The Canadian state as a political and juridical independent entity continues to be favoured by the United States as opposed to transforming the Canadian state into a 51st state or breaking up the provinces into politically integrated entities like Cascadia on the West Coast.

17. Since the Conservative Party lost any credibility as a defender of Canada's nationalist interest under Deifenbaker and was closely identified with the United States under Mulroney, the Liberal Party has become the handmaiden of continentialization with the Conservative Party finally decaying when it lost its Quebec base because of the Bloc Quebecois.

18. Within the trade union movement, Canadian nationalism has spurred on the development of democracy and autonomy. Independent Canadian trade unions are not in themselves a guarantee of being more progressive but movements for democracy frequently result in autonomy; for example, many CAW locals.

During the discussion the following issues were discussed and considered:

1. Does the Canada situation remain unique or, with the globalization of capital and trade, have other countries not duplicated the same branch-plant relationship that Canada has with the United States?

2. Whether a Canadian culture does exist objectively as opposed to Ross' suggestion that it was a very weak culture. Gord pointed out that our concept of nationalism would be meaningless if we deny the existence of a separate Canadian culture from that of the United States.

3. That Ross' response to Matthews and Steele's efforts to establish a quota on U.S. professors in Canada was only partially correct.

4. Lois pointed out that the Canadian nationalist movement defines the basic parameters of Canadian radicalism in the current context. She gave an example of her attendance at a meeting where David Orchard spoke. Gord made the point that the Canadian nationalist movement has not replaced the NDP as giving a political definition to Canadian radicalism as a political party.

NEXT EDUCATIONAL

John Darling on a Communist Life - Jack Scott

LABOUR:

Harry reported on the Bakery Workers Union struggle. A meeting took place on Saturday where twenty-four members of Local 181 of the Bakery Workers Union reconfirmed Issa and An on the Executive. It was chaired by an independent executive member. A new meeting has been called for. The International President of the Union has taken the side of President Potok. A petition has also been circulated calling for a new meeting which has at least 100 names on it. The charges against Issa have been withdrawn as a result of the fact that he was fired and Potok hopes to avoid confronting Issa as a result of his dismissal and possible termination from membership in the Union. However, new charges have been laid against Ann returnable on December 13th and that is the date when we are focusing the new meeting. Harry reported that a large number of Chinese women have responded to the struggle. Issa describes them as being "fearless". The members decided not to follow our advice and did not pass a motion temporarily suspending the executive until the next meeting indicating the next meeting itself could suspend them if it wanted.

Gord and Lois reported on the teachers struggle. Gord pointed out that many militants were left in the lurch by the three teachers federations that abandoned the struggle. It could have either moved forward or backward. The disunity among the teachers resulted in dissipation of the militancy though the resistance continues in a variety of ways with the general protest involving spontaneous pickets, the green ribbon campaign, a rising crescendo of activity among teachers and a great deal of politicization unfortunately much of which will be taken advantage of by the Liberal Party which has played up the teachers struggle and is likely to benefit from it at the next election to the dismay of the NDP. Gord pointed out that the NDP continues to have little credibility among teachers especially since the social contract is raised. Gord pointed out that a powerful initiative would be needed in order to impel the struggle forward to a general strike and that a powerful initiative would have been needed to bring it to that level. While it would have been desirable to take it in that direction, the disunity among the teachers shows that this overall

direction was not possible at present. However, a general strike would have been the only way to block the bill and the parliamentary maneuvers around it.

There continues to be major pressure on the Tories. Many teachers who campaigned against Bill 160 are former Tories or Tory voters. Some Tory back benchers may also feel the pressure. The Tories need to be defeated and only a general strike could have done it but the vacuum on the political left by Bob Rae's betrayal by his social contract has resulted in a general sense that you cannot trust politicians. The OSSTF even has in it persons who have suggested that the Liberal Party be infiltrated for the purpose of building opposition to Bill 160. This is because the NDP is not trusted.

Cooke is perceived as a toady for the Tories' educational policies. The Liberals appear to be intervening as aggressively as the NDP over the issue. There is a generalized consciousness which has reached the level of resistance and it is heading towards giving the Liberal Party a majority in the next election. The vacuum on the left has meant the political level of the teachers has not risen higher. At least part of the low level of political understanding expresses itself in a personalisation of Harris' policies with the solution being posed of getting rid of him. While labour showed unity and shrewd action, and the resistance is broad, there has been no coherent political expression of the opposition to the Tories in any political party form. Parent filled the vacuum for some time but the spirit of resistance still is maintained in efforts to continue the campaign against Bill 160. Hampton has raised the issue of Bill 160 and there is a movement to recall Harris. There are also two petitions: one for a referendum on Bill 160 and one to the Federal Government to suspend Harris which is being circulated. While these projects are good, their values are largely symbolic and they are bound to die down, especially in the absence of mass public resistance. Nonetheless, a consciousness has been raised against the government. Overall though, the struggle is defensive in character as it has been in the past in a broader sense defending the rights of public employees, defending reforms, defending the educational system, defending existing rights and it does not have an aggressive transitional edge. Even Michele Lansberg in a recent column provided a political anti-Harris analysis which left one with a sense that the Liberals should get elected in order to defeat Harris at all costs.

NEW BUSINESS:

There was a brief discussion of the postal strike. CUPW cleverly exposed the government's refusal to negotiate by agreeing to new packaging involving some concessions on the eve of the strike.

Motion carried to have next meeting three weeks from today.

Meeting adjourned circa 10.44 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING
Held on February 11, 1998
Meeting Commenced at 8.45 p.m.

Chair: Zane

Attendance: John Darling, John Glenn, Lois, Harry and Gord

Absent: Mike and Joe Steinbok

MINUTES:

There were corrections to the last Minutes. The reference to Kormos should have pointed out that after Rae's leadership, the present leadership is sanctifying his conduct which is in contrast to the treatments that he had earlier received. Another correction was made to point out that the merger of the two banks reflected their efforts to sacrifice their pre-eminent position in Canada in order to be able to play a major role in the U.S. market. The computer companies' unification indicates that they are attempting to rationalize their operations through monopolization.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Gord circulated a fund drive appeal by Roy Romanow from the N.D.P. in Saskatchewan which carried a solid reformist program and also referred to democratic socialism which was somewhat unusual for a mainstream N.D.P. leader to do. It did, however, view the possibility of an independent Quebec and Quebec nationalism as a threat to the interests of all Canadian working people.

There was a report by Harry about the death of Joe Salzberg. He was a leader of the Canadian CP who worked his way up from the trade union fraction of the party in the needle trade to become one of the very few elected members of a legislative assembly during McCarthyism when he was elected repeatedly in the 1940s and 50s as the communist MPP from Spadina. He was finally done in by redbaiting, and at the same time, split from the CP after the Kruschov revelations about Stalinism and tolerance of anti-semiticism. He founded the New Fraternal Jewish Association which took a reformist position. He became an active promoter of Yiddish language and culture and eventually moved towards Zionism. He was active in the Zionist Labour Movement until his death at the age of 95.

EDUCATIONAL:

There was a further discussion about Brian Palmer's book on Jack Scott. Gord pointed out the similarity between Scott's position and those of syndicalism.

Scott combined a Canadian radical trade union experience in B.C. with a broad-based Maoism that developed there to the left of the established CP. He was not a Party favorite and did not always follow the Party line. He was influenced both by Progressive Worker which carried a nationalist line as well as his own experiences in the broad trade union movement which made him a militant to contend with. Palmer does not discuss in any depth his differences with Scott. Scott's life overall reflects the limited opportunities that organized political parties offered radical militants during the period from the 1940s through to the 1970s.

It was agreed that Gord would give his educational on post-modernism at the next branch meeting and Harry would give his on the Red Power Movement at the following meeting. The emphasis of Harry's educational will be on the Royal Commission's analysis and recommendations which were filed several months ago with the Canadian Federal Government.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

John filed a treasurer's report. The balance in our active account is $1,500.00. The balance of our investment account continues at the appropriate interest rates.

LABOUR:

There was a lengthy discussion regarding John Glenn's situation with the public school teachers being integrated into other trade union organizations following Bill 160. There was a sense that Weisleder was trying to avoid dealing with the realities imposed by Bill 160, that we should not attempt to duplicate old pre-Bill 160 structures that no longer had validity, that a full democratic discussion should take place as much as possible as to the constitution of a new body and the appropriate new structures and that the old elected leadership, along with two democratically elected additional, should continue to lead the members during the short interim transitional period.

NEW BUSINESS:

John Darling mentioned that Harry intervened effectively on behalf of Roza Radin before the Ontario Labour Relations Board making clear and simple points which hopefully will allow her to proceed with her application under the Health and Safety Act against the President of the Bakery Workers' Local 181 Union who was harassing her in various ways.

Meeting adjourned circa 11.00 p.m.

2/17/98

fg0506

Forward Group

(notes from cancelled meeting April 5, 1998)

To: (*attending)

	*Lois B.	
	Zane B.	
	*John D.	e-mail
	Mike D.	
	Gord D.	e-mail
	John G.	
	Harry K.	e-mail
	*Chuck R.	
	*Joe S.	e-mail

Due to illness and inability to attend on the part of a majority of comrades the meeting was cancelled. However a discussion was held and it was proposed:

1) the mext meeting be either Tuesday May 12, or May 19, and that at this meeting we continue the discussion on André Gunder-Frank's article on the ex-Soviet Union and Eastern workers' states with Mike giving his evaluation.

2) that the following meeting if due May 26 be delayed since Marxist Institute is hosting a 150th Anniversary celebration of the Communist Manifesto with a dozen guest speakers, Fri.-Sat. May 22-23 (copy notice enclosed or e-mail Scott, <sforsyth@yorku.ca>.

3) following meeting earliest June 2 with John D. on native-Quebecois sovereignty conflicts.

Other: Greg Albo (York U.) on "The Communist Manifesto and the World Economy Today" at Socialist Action, 517 College Rm 234, 7pm, Thurs. May 14.

Decided against trying for delegates to ONDP convention end of May.

Need to reinvest interest accrued on account.

John D. suggests donation to Canadian Dimension (plus subs?) since it is totally independent left magazine of quality and asking for support.

Note Jim Mitchell picked up remaindered copy of 1995 bio on Earle Birney by Elspeth Cameron for Lois. John D. also got one; totally friendly and accurate (if very sketchy) on Trotskyist positions so far, quotes R.D. on Birney's "Long Table."

Now printed revelation of conflict in ONDP Prov. Council where visible minority delegates protested leadership's continued dumping of meaningful or explicit employment equity policy.

Lois attended St. Catharines Day of Protest.

Chuck reports he will be doing post-grad in the US probably this fall.

Dispersed at 10:30 pm.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING
Held on November 4, 1998
Meeting Commenced at 8:30 p.m.

Chair; **John Darling**

Attendance: **Lois, Joe S., Gord D., Rozi D., Zane B.**

Absent: **John Glenn, Mike D. away without explanation**

MINUTES:

It was pointed out that the last Minutes failed to set out clear and accurately the criteria used by Gord in assessing the position which we should take on the Irish peace referendum. It was also pointed out that there were numerous spelling mistakes in the Minutes as well. Motion carried to adopt the Minutes as amended and corrected.

CORRESPONDENCE:

No report.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

Harry reported on his trip to Vancouver. He met Ned D. and Steve Penner of the Communist League. They appeared to be completely obsessed with discussions about their positions on South America and seemed not to be able to relate in any meaningful way to any Canadian or British Columbian issues. While they were personally friendly, they appeared to be politically inert.

In addition, he met some activists in the environmental movement. Overall the impression was left that anarcho-environmental activists who influenced a lot of youth.

Harry also met with Colleen Glynn, Ron Dixon and their son Paul. In a discussion that lasted about two and a half hours a number of comments were made by Ron, not all agreed to by the others present which include the following:

The N.D.P. was trying to do what it could and in particular took good and clear positions on the dispute with the United States regarding the attack on British Columbia's autonomy over its fisheries, on the issue of the NISGA Indian Treaty and referendum issue and the issue of forestry clear-cutting. For example, Ron felt that the N.D.P. was unfairly criticized by extremer elements in the environmental movement on the issue of clear-cutting, pointing out that the N.D.P. had developed a mechanism for democratic input from Natives, environmentalists, the tourist industry, local rural residents and others in assessing clear-cut proposals by the industry, that it was basically suffering from a decline in popularity because of the economic downturn caused by a decline in the price of pulp and paper which has resulted in a lot of jobs being lost in the pulp and paper industry and that conservative forces were mobilizing in a united front behind the Provincial Liberal party in an effort to defeat the N.D.P. government. He pointed out that the labour movement in British Columbia around the B.C. Fed was playing an astute, sophisticated and progressive role backing the N.D.P. completely on the NISGA Treaty which also has broad support among the public and also enthusiastically endorsing the APEC protests. He thought that the labour movement and the N.D.P. had a relatively good and positive relationship although he took issue with the capping of salaries for construction workers imposed by the N.D.P. government which was affecting the Union that he was working as a lawyer for, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). He indicated that he knew little about the situation in Ontario but

criticized the OFL for being over-confrontational with the Rae government, defended the Rae government's imposition of "Rae Days" and criticized Judy Darcy for histrionic opposition and confrontation with the N.D.P. government.

Ron also said that he was hoping that Quebec workers would vote in favour of staying in Canada in any referendum although he agreed that the present situation did not reflect any belief on their part that they could do so as equals within the present existing structures and further defended the N.D.P.'s policy of requiring a three month waiting period for welfare recipients to qualify for benefits upon their arrival in British Columbia, pointing out that the Alberta government had given their own welfare recipients free one-way tickets to British Columbia thereby undermining the integrity of British Columbia's welfare system. He pointed out that he had raised with the Women's Affairs Minister and other Ministers in the cabinet specific exemptions that should be made to persons seeking to qualify for welfare including women who are escaping abusing husbands and that the N.D.P. leadership responded to all his suggestions and incorporated them, thereby suggesting that the N.D.P. leadership was open to any potential deficiencies in the law and was responsive to the needs of deserving persons. He further defended a 25 dollar cut in the allowances given male unemployed workers because it was presented as part of a package of other welfare reforms which generally were good. He also pointed out that he was made President of the Technical University, a storefront operation set up by the B.C. N.D.P. government whose purpose it was to expand very rapidly in the next two or three years in order to train postgraduate students and develop software technology and related skills in order to be able to meet the demand

for qualified workers with local residents rather than workers imported from outside the country.

While Ron expressed the view that the New Democratic Youth was in a good state, it was obvious that both Colleen and his son Paul disagreed with this assessment though they did not make it a big deal.

Ron pointed out that whatever left elements that were in the N.D.P. were not working together to build a left caucus but rather appear to be caught up in their own areas of work. He has not been in touch with Hilda Thomas for many years and saw the point for reorientation of the left around the labour movement where he himself was situated.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

There is no change from the previous financial report given.

N.D.P:

The upcoming convention of the Socialist Caucus will be taking place later this month. It was agreed that the comrades should generally try to attend it if they can and to participate in it.

EDUCATIONAL:

Motion carried to give a talk at the next meeting on the European Economic Union and the discussion concerning Ireland continued.

Gord pointed out that it was important for us to understand that the previous discussion was based on articles in the Bulletin in Defence of Marxism and International Viewpoint. Different articles with different lines including one very strongly for the Peace Referendum and one strongly critical of it were carried in both magazines and our discussion was based on the appreciation of the analysis contained in those articles. In addition, it was critical to understand that it was the change of the mass mood and attitude towards the issue of terrorism and peace that was behind the view put forward by Gord in his educational last week. Harry traced very briefly the evolution of the Irish National struggle from its revolutionary height in 1916 in the Irish Rebellion through the ongoing political and military struggle led by the I.R.A. through the twenties and thirties. By the fifties and sixties, the military struggle with the I.R.A. had developed counterproductive features and no longer received the mass support it had on previous occasions. The movement in fact reached its height around the defence of the Maze Prison hunger strikes, many of whom died courageously and sparked a massive struggle for their defence and for the defence of political prisoners in general. By this time, the civil rights movement had become exhausted and a middle class movement led by two Irish housewives took on a broad character mobilizing large numbers of the petty bourgeois who wanted economic stability and an end to the Troubles. The decline of the armed struggle and its growing impotence resulted in the severe splintering of the military wing of the I.R.A. and its ongoing marginalization. Finally, it was clear that the mass mood was one in favour of ending the slaughter of innocent people and in favour of economic stability and the referendum vote expressed a desire for security.

LABOUR

No report.

NEW BUSINESS:

Zane mentioned that he was getting involved in tenant struggles in the area where he is living and that this has reinvigorated him recently. Next meeting to take place two weeks later.

Meeting adjourned 10:30 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING
Held on November 18, 1998
Meeting Commenced at 8:30 p.m.

Chair; **Gord Doctorow**

Attendance: **Zane, Harry, John Glenn, Lois, Gord, Mike**

Absent: **Joe was sick**

MINUTES:

M/C to postpone minutes to next meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE:

No report.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

There was a discussion about having a New Year's event. It was agreed that we will have a party between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturday January 2, 1998 at Harry's with appropriate winter foods like chili and soup and non-alcoholic punch (it should be a BYOB affair.)

A list of persons that we should get in touch with was agreed on. John Darling can prepare a leaflet and have it ready for the next meeting. There are facilities for ice skating and tobogganing nearby. A fuller report should be given at the next meeting or whether we should have a program, etc.

Harry reported that G.B. wanted to attend the next meeting. It was agreed that she should be permitted to do so and be treated as a contact.

There was also a discussion about the tasks and perspective situation before our movement. In particular, there was a discussion as to whether or not our meetings might not be more informal and accessible rather than being closed as they have tended to be in the past. We have been together long enough and sufficiently integrated enough to constitute a solid Bolshevik core. Our long period of common experience enables us to exhibit the utmost organizational flexibility. While setting up a bookstore, a public face and a headquarters is far from being on the agenda at present, it may well be that we could be more accessible especially in terms of having every second meeting accessible to radicalizing persons who wanted to participate in our discussions. This could be facilitated by having every second meeting be an educational and generally letting people know what topics we are discussing. Of course, there is no magic bullet for solving our organizational weakness or reversing the historic trend that has resulted in our lack of growth. However, it was agreed that we discuss opening up our meetings and that this discussion could be carried on over the next few meetings as part of a general tasks and perspectives report.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

There is no change from the previous financial report given. There is approximately $2,500.00 in the bank.

N.D.P:

There was a further discussion on Sewell's campaign. Both Lois and John Darling suggested that a progressive feminist activist who is running for nomination of the Rosedale NDP Riding might be supported. However Gord pointed out that the NDP remains marginalized, that the crisis continues in the labour movement, that most activists including CAW, Steel and municipal activists are not likely to support the NDP enthusiastically in the next election campaign because of the "strategic voting strategy" which elements of the labour movement have adopted to defeat Harris by any means including to support the candidate who has the best chance of defeating the Tories in their riding which in the overwhelming majority of ridings will mean a Liberal candidate instead of a NDPer. The NDP is not perceived and will not be perceived in this election as espousing a labour alternative in any meaningful or broad sense. As Sewell was effectively the leader of the anti-amalgamation movement against Toronto incumbent candidate Al Leach in Rosedale, the overall majority of activists are likely to support him and he will be seen as the alternative in the riding. We should instead consider working with these activists and participating in their campaign. Sewell's policies are just as radical as that of the NDP and he remains a strong symbol of the activist anti-Harris forces. In these circumstances, we should continue being open on the question and have the comrades attend the next Rosedale Riding meeting in order to observe and report to us what is going to happen.

The current confusion however surrounding this issue reflects the ongoing disorientation of the NDP, both federally and provincially.

There was discussion about Alexa McDonough taking on Marcel Masse in very strong and unparliamentary terms.

EDUCATIONAL:

A motion was made that Harry be permitted to give his educational, originally on the European Economic Union, in two parts with the first part reflecting a general analysis of the economic situation internationally and in particular, based on Ernest Mandel's article reprinted by IDOM in 1992. The presentation by Harry basically followed the line of Mandel's article, (a copy is enclosed.) John Darling in his contribution brought the situation up-to-date and the discussion dealt with a variety of issues including the organic composition of capital and how that has changed, factors influencing the falling rate of profit, whether or not Mandel's belief that capitalism usually has one country dominate the world economy when it is doing well is in fact the case and the factors influencing the radicalization of the working class including the state of combativity of the class and how it is affected when it has been defeated in earlier struggles.

LABOUR

Gord gave a brief report on the situation with OSSTF in Toronto. There are contradictions in the situation which has developed with the restructuring the Teachers' Union and fundamental issues including the need for a newsletter are being posed. We are trying to develop a more effective mass orientation for the OSSTF. The restructuring in some ways is offering an opportunity for unifying and making the teaching force more militant by causing it to rely on the Union and its structures and facilities more and more in order to take on issues in the workplace. This is causing the OSSTF to function

along more classical union lines including developing positions akin to that of shop stewards, etc.

NEW BUSINESS:

John Darling and Lois Bedard have been going through the archives material. John has spent approximately 15 hours helping to sort them. We shall soon be able to have a rough index and have a sense of what is in some of the boxes. He is has also been able to locate some of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee materials. Next meeting to take place in two weeks.

Meeting adjourned 11:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING
Held on December 2, 1998
Meeting Commenced at 8:30 p.m.

Chair; **Lois**

Attendance: **Zane, Gord, Harry, John D.**

Absent with reason: **Joe S., John G. Mike, Geraldine B.**

MINUTES:

Motion carried to adopt minutes of November 18th and November 4th 1998. Gord made the point that the minutes were somewhat over-detailed containing information that was not necessary to put into the minutes.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Lois mentioned that she received correspondence regarding the stacks of archives maintained by the University of Toronto library system based on contributions from Kenny dealing with the Communist Party of Canada. She will bring the notice regarding this material to the next meeting so that we can discuss the possibility of her attending to view it in order to get some ideas for organizing our own archives.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

A motion was carried to postpone the discussion regarding the organizational options before our movement at present to delay their meeting in light of the fact that several persons who wanted to participate in that discussion were not present.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

There was no substantial difference from previous financial reports made by our Treasurer, John Darling. However Lois indicated that she was able to find some funds which Ross had maintained for contingency purposes. It was agreed that we would deposit this money appropriately and account for it and use it for such purposes as are appropriate. One of those purposes of course would include covering the ongoing expenses of organizing the archives. In this regard, John Darling has been spending a considerable amount of time organizing the files and creating an index. There are still numerous boxes on the floor at Lois' place and John has been keeping track of his time. It was agreed that we should compensate John for the time that he has put into the matter to the present including his expenses at the rate of $10.00 per hour and a motion was passed to hire John in order to continue indexing the archives in the foreseeable future. John felt that the matter could be completed within a few weeks.

N.D.P:

There was a discussion of the Socialist Caucus meeting which was organized by Barry Weisleder's group. A full factual report of the proceedings was already circulated to most of the comrades and John will make it available to those who have not yet received it. However, the discussion emphasized a number or points including how hopelessly sectarian and difficult it is to work in this milieu, how John's response and reaction including the positions that he took to various resolutions were essentially accurate, how Socialist Action's efforts to force a full analytical manifesto as well as their position antagonistic to Canadian nationalism on the meeting alienated and made it difficult to build a broad, viable, ongoing, integrated group in the N.D.P. and how the only real viable forces that appear to show an interest at this time in constructing a Socialist Caucus outside of Kormos himself were several young persons who had come from towns

in southern Ontario including Peterborough. A group around Willie Lambert in Oshawa appears to be moving in their own direction. The discussion pointed out that the Socialist Caucus appears to have been stillborn and with its present leadership, including the inflexibility of dogmatic persons like Flexer and is likely to remain sterile. The young persons who were present, mostly in their early twenties, showed that there is some interest. Unfortunately, it is not likely that we will be able to maintain any contact with them if only because of the infrequency with which we will run into them. Many of these people are around a leader of the young New Democrats who has an overall healthy perspective at the present time.

John Darling also reported on the Rosedale N.D.P. meeting. There were about a hundred people generally divided into older loyalists and long-time party members as well as younger persons with a heavy emphasis of gay activists in the latter group. The issue at the last membership meeting was whether the N.D.P. should run against Sewell who is taking on Al Leach. It was agreed that Sewell symbolized opposition to the GTA and was the logically perceived candidate to support among the population as a whole and among activists in particular against Leach, and has the best chance of defeating him. A vote was held resulting in a 57-43 split in favour or running. The N.D.P. nominee, Helen Breslauer is a competent, able speaker who ran a strong campaign last time. However her supporters seem to be oblivious to the Sewell campaign, had no real ability to grasp its dynamics and potential and appeared to take a business as usual approach.

It was agreed that John would go around to both campaigns though any orientation to activists and the most politically viable people probably would mean that he would have to meet them around the Sewell campaign.

EDUCATIONAL:

Harry gave the second part of his educational on the economic situation with a special emphasis on European economic integration. He made the following points:

- Neo-liberalism has not proven to be an optimal model for capitalist expansion;
- that the fundamental reason for the economic crisis arises out of the inability of the North to be able to purchase the products produced by southern countries;
- that southern countries have had their economies oriented towards exports and in order to seek to attract investment, have lowered their salaries. This has resulted in drying up their own internal markets and making them hyper-sensitive to any slow-down in the world economy;
- that as, a result, developing countries have suffered most from the crises that have taken place internationally;
- that, to overcome the contradictions through broader regional economic arrangements, like the European Economic Market, capital is likely to exacerbate regional contradictions and make the rich corporations become richer and the poor poorer except in underdeveloped areas;
- that the state is being modified by the multinationals in order to meet their extra territorial needs;

- that a Europe built on free market policies based on bureaucratic techno-structures would crack at the first real shock because of differential and unequal interests;

- that differences remain in pricing, fiscal systems and social norms;

- that European unification does not mean flexible coordination but competitive fragmentation;

- that meager resources are allocated to regional assistance and will inevitably fail to solve the problem of equalizing the standard of living in all European countries;

- that a common agricultural policy will undermine French farmers and others economically;

- that the common market means centralization of production in a few core regions, and concentration of ownership among the biggest and wealthiest multi-nationals;

- that relationships with the East European associate states will basically mirror similar problems forced on the existing poorer regions of Europe;

- that the Euro will homogenize national economic cycles eliminating the ability of exchange rates to lessen the tensions caused by the internal division of labour through fluctuations;

- that the Euro to be introduced next January 1, 1999 will accelerate the institutional unification of Europe including the possibility of permitting a European budget.

The discussion posed a number of questions including the following:

- the meaning of the term neo-liberalism;

- whether the European economic market cannot in fact work to a certain extent despite its contradictions;

- the role of the modern state including its changing character because of the economic changes taking place;

- the role of the speculation of capitalism in undermining the economies of the developing countries which Harry downplayed;

- the impact of social democratic governments on most European countries and how this is effecting the dynamics of a unified Europe;

- the different needs which capitalists now have of their state apparatuses which they did not have earlier before globalization;

- the renewed state of combativitity of the working class of the current generation because of their previous successes in maintaining a high standard of living.

- the question whether overall it can be said that the state is intervening less of more and the nature of its intervention including its focus on disciplining workers and regulating the flow of capital;

- the interpenetration of capital including American capital in Europe and its effect on any international economic cycles;

- whether the state protective function is disappearing.

The next item under educational was a discussion on Quebec.

It is obvious that many working class PQers especially younger people were not inspired by Bouchard's campaign in light of its attacks on teachers and hospital services over last year and for that reason the popular vote of the PQ declined. The overall nationalist vote was 56% including Action Democratique 11.8% vote. The vote was higher in pro-Liberal party ridings than in working class PQ ridings. It deserves to be explored why it is that the civil servants in Quebec City did not support PQ as reflected in a decline of their vote in that area. The voter turnout was 78.5% lower than the 81.6% in the 1994 Provincial elections. The Liberals also went down from 44.4% achieved by Daniel Johnson in 1994 to 43.71%. It looked like the social contradictions impinged on the national contradictions. Bouchard still has a large number of options available to him, may well plan on forming a unified coalition on issues with Dumont and even get the native people behind him and may be seeking to lead all the Provincial Premiers on social union issues in a very clever move and was extremely adept at portraying Charest as the Mike Harris of Quebec.

It is highly unlikely that a real spirit could be built behind the PQ which would bring out the youth vote unless a social vision is tied to the national vision. Bouchard represents elitist statisim and paternalism against Charest's tradition of cutting down the role of the state which goes against the earlier Quebec Liberal party traditions of Lesage and Bourassa. There was no force to the left and no other place for militants to go. The elections also showed that the capitalists are not totally clear on what they want to do in Quebec and are frustrated.

LABOUR

No report.

NEW BUSINESS:

Harry will get John a version of the New Year's leaflet for the January 2, 1999 party out within a couple of days.

Meeting adjourned 11:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING
Held on January 20, 1999
Meeting Commenced at 8:50 p.m.

Chair; **John Darling**

Attendance: **Zane, Harry, John Glenn, Lois, Gord (late)**

Absent: **Joe S. away with reason**

MINUTES:

Motion carried to postpone approval of last meeting's minutes until the next meeting.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

John Darling presented a report on the latest issue of Revolutionary Marxism Today (see copy enclosed). His report indicated that R.M.T. supporters were kicked off the Bidom Editorial Board because of differences over whether or not a Leninist party should be built now and over whether the Labour Party should be running candidates. About 150 members of the Bidom Editorial Board that remained after the exclusion appeared to be hardening their position into a line and adapting to the pressures of finding a short cut to building the Labour Party. In addition, the R.M.T. argues that the Bidom Editorial Board mistakes the beginning of the realization of the task of the establishing of a nucleus of a Leninist party with the existence and creation of the Leninist party itself in complete form.

The R.M.T. group has now joined Socialist Action and is appealing to the Bidom supporters to join them in the socialist action. This organization must have undergone some kind of change over the years as it was not actively involved initially among its

California supporters in building the local labour party members groups. They are appealing to the remaining Bidom members to abandon the Solidarity Group which resulted in a disasterous experience for them and in joining the SA. along with them

Harry previously tried to contact Jim Miles and Vera Wigglesworth last year without success. We should now write them again on behalf of the Forward Group identifying ourselves as a long term tendancy with a lengthy tradition of being active in the C.C.F. and N.D.P. We should also point out to them that we are one of several Trostkyist tendancies but one which was had a unique experience in the Canadian context which we would be happy to write to them about if they were interested. Of course, we would not lecture them on their own position but simply indicate to them what works for us in this article if they decided to accept it. It is a good idea to contact them ahead of time to see if they are interested, as the Socialist Action Group based in Toronto appears to enjoy formal status with them. Socialist Action is one of three tendancies that identified with the Fourth International after the expulsions from the S.W.P. The other groups included Solidarity which had a Fourth Internationalist Tendancy (F.I.T.) in it and the current group around Bidom. Motion carried to correspond to the R.M.T. comrades as indicated.

There was a discussion about the social which we had following New Year's which included viewing a film. It was decided that the social was successful and that we should have another one. Harry indicated that the second floor of 40 Crang Avenue has a large room and large T.V. set. Motion carried to have a movie viewing at 40 Crang Avenue on February 28, 1999 and to decide which movie should be seen later.

Ron Hugh asked Harry if he could be copied the Forward Group minutes. Motion carried to forward copies of the Forward Group minutes to Ron Hugh. Motion carried to send him a set of the last three or four minutes.

N.D.P:

Harry pointed out that a number of articles had appeared in the left wing Press over the past few months on the dilemna that the N.D.P. is in all of which are criticizing the N.D.P. from the left but none of which are putting forward our kind of conclusions in terms of revitalizing the N.D.P. In addition, some articles have appeared in the daily media also critical of the right wing drift of the N.D.P. Harry raised the possibility of circulating a brochure outlining our position and the history of the Left Caucus as well as its activities in order to counter the degeneration of the party under the Rae leadership. However it was decided that we should respond to the next article which comes along so that our intervention will be part of a unfolding natural dialogue. Our article of course will deal with the question of whether the N.D.P. is dead in terms of an analysis of what is behind its decline following its adaptationism to capital while in office in Ontario and in particular, its betrayal of its labour base by endorsing the social contract. We would then be able to present a rounded picture of an activist party rooted in mass struggles and carrying on a fight for social change in all arenas.

Gord also reported on a school leaflet which was put out by supporters of the present N.D.P. leadership. The leaflet clearly indicates that Hampton has repudiated a social contract and clearly states that it was an experience that the N.D.P. would never go

through again. This is a significant admission in an attempt to break from the Rae leadership. Rae has now openly embraced capitalism in his latest book. Gord also reported that Irene Atkinson has been nominated to run as M.P.P. provincially in the Parkdale west end and Toronto ridings. This shows that the N.D.P. is not seen as a threat or maybe even a factor of any significance by persons with a red Tory tradition, that the program of the N.D.P. melds well with their tradition and that prominent Tories like Irene Atkinson can take advantage of the N.D.P.s organizational muscle. Gord also reported that Liz Barkeley is currently President of the Ontario Teachers' Federation which is the all-encompassing group for teachers in Ontario. While she opposes strategic voting, it is becoming the dominant electoral strategy for many teachers including O.S.S.T.F.

Hargrove's position is a relatively sophisticated version of this form of adaptationism. While he doesn't renounce the N.D.P. as "our party", he calls upon the labour movement to be "realistic" and make advances that are possible to be made. While the N.D.P. is to be supported enthusiastically where it has serious electoral prospects, where it can't win, the Tories have to be defeated at all costs. Hargrove's position does not deal with the responsibility that the labour movement has to ensure that the N.D.P. is totally organically responsive to labour's needs. The C.A.W. remains uninvolved in the N.D.P. except at conventions or through leadership pow-wows. This stands in sharp contrast to the Steelworker's Union which participates actively in a wide variety of N.D.P. activities including contributing finances and personnel to most levels of the Party. There was considerable opposition to Hargrove's opportunistic line which would mean supporting the Liberals in the majority of ridings in the next Provincial election which could be

called as early as the Spring. The opposition however was diffuse at the last National Council meeting of the C.A.W. and nowhere was a coherent position advanced which would involve C.A.W. members moving into the N.D.P. as activists who could steer the party in the direction of protecting workers' interests consistently and aggressively. With Ken Georgetti of the B.C. Fed taking over the leadership of the C.L.C. from Bob White, there already has been considerable talk about renewed economic militancy and Georgetti has called Alexa McDonough to task for the federal N.D.P.'s drift towards Blairism and its unrealistic campaign to win support among small businessmen.

It is obvious that Steel is the only union that is seriously committed to the N.D.P. and of course, to the political bureaucracy represented by the Hampton leadership. Hargrove fails to understand that the problem with the N.D.P. is a political one and not an organizational one. It is only a strategy that works both from the inside and outside of the N.D.P. that can make it an effective voice for the labour movement.

ARCHIVES REPORT:

There was a general discussion about the Archives. John suggested that there were three alternatives: either to leave all the archives here (Lois has a second bedroom available), either send them all the Ottawa Archives or thirdly to photocopy minutes and internal documents and keep them in Toronto while sending the originals to Ottawa. It was also suggested that the Canadian Archives would not want to take any of our material dealing with the American situation. John indicated that it would be highly desirable to have copies of key parts of the Archives in Toronto if we are every going to write the history of Canadian Trotskyism.

EDUCATIONAL:

Motion carried to continue our discussion on the Euro at the next educational at our meeting to be held two be held two weeks from today. There was also discussion on the possibility of having an educational on an article by Michael Lowy published in Monthly Review on Apparent Errors in the Communist Manifesto on questions such as nationalism, ecology, on Marx being Eurocentric etc. It was pointed out that the criticisms were merely ignoring the fact that Marx reflected the reality of his lifetime, especially on more detailed issues. This did not retract from the general perspicuity of his thoughts or methodology.

LABOUR:

Gord reported on the O.S.S.T.F. The left group of teachers in the O.S.S.T.F. is clearly not grounded. While Gord has made contact with a number of important people with key positions in the teachers' movement, the organizational work in the O.S.S.T.F. in terms of a structured principled left will have to take place over a long period of time.

Meeting adjourned 11:00 p.m.

(Found in Feb. 6, 1998) (26) Ref: P-6

Recent newspaper reports describing the R.C.M.P.'s involvement in blowing up a gas-well shack in a covert operation in Alberta last fall have referred to it as an isolated event that was regretfully necessary. In response to analysts tying the event to the dirty tricks campaign orchestrated by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police from the 1950s through the 1970s, Chief Superintendent Rod MacKay of the R.C.M.P.'s Alberta Division made the point that "I don't think there is any association whatsoever with those kinds of days." The issue is therefore posed: Was the oil-well shack explosion a unique event not likely to be repeated? Was the R.C.M.P. conduct in this matter justified? If not, what can be done to prevent this from happening again?

A review of the history of the R.C.M.P. shows its role as an instrument of the elites that dominate Canadian society for maintaining the status quo. From its inception as the Northwest Mounted Police in the last century, the federal police force was instrumental in establishing "law and order" as the Canadian state expanded westward and northward into areas occupied by Aboriginal peoples. In

fact, the R.C.M.P. originated as a paramilitary calvary force mobilized over a hundred years ago to end communal ownership of the prairie lands and to crush the Indian-Metis resistance to the encroachments of the Canadian Pacific Railway as well as to clear the way for attendant European settlements. Not long afterwards, in 1919, the force confronted the united citizenry of Winnipeg in suppressing its general strike during a period of labour restlessness following the First World War. During the 1930s and 1940s, the R.C.M.P., as can be garnered from even a brief perusal of its official quarterly, openly harboured and promoted xenophobic and virulently racist right wing concepts. It was used to crush the labour movement in the bloody repression in Estavan and to harass and spy on radicals and labour activists during this time. In the 1950s and 1960s, the R.C.M.P. began its Operations Oddball and Checkmate directing its activities against the peace movement, labour militants, black activists and later, the N.D.P.'s Waffle group. Much of its work in Operation Checkmate targeted legitimate socialist and labour tendencies in an effort to prevent such groups from gaining mass influence within the N.D.P. Its operation finally culminated in

admitted acts of criminal conduct including falsifying documents, forgery and circulating false messages.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, R.C.M.P. agents were engaged in a wide variety of terrorist acts under Operation Ham and similar mandates in order to legitimize the arrest of more than 500 leading Quebec labour, cultural and political leaders in an effort to behead the quickly growing nationalist movement at that time, thereby providing a political rationale for invoking the repressive *War Measures Act* in October, 1970. The R.C.M.P.'s operational litany during this time involved arson, mischief, break-ins, theft of dynamite, falsifying income tax returns to get persons in trouble, pouring salt into the gas tank of a car in order to immobilize it and sending false messages to persons telling they that their relatives were sick or behaving strangely. They even engaged in an abduction.

The records of the McDonald Commission Report on R.C.M.P. wrongdoing offer a clear and succinct picture of the R.C.M.P.'s justification for its conduct: national

security. Chief Superintendent Donald Cobb, conceding the illegal character of a whole series of R.C.M.P. operations, explained them in the following words: "We were used to living with certain illegalities. They were so common place they were no longer thought of as illegal. We no longer saw them as illegal but as fundamental." R.C.M.P. witnesses before the McDonald Commission made it clear that they did not consider their acts to be criminal or wrong and that they were justified in defence of Canada because of what he called the "universal fact" that force was sometimes necessary. Cobb justified, among other things, psychological terror and physical assault in violation of the law, with the words, "What we have done is relatively banal compared to what has been done by other intelligence services." As far as the issue of the potential abuse of such broad powers as the R.C.M.P. claimed to be able to exercise, its response was simply that the public had to trust it. Most Canadians, however, prefer to live in a country based on the rule of law, based on justice, not trust. Regretfully, however, the comments before the Commission are oddly mimicked by the R.C.M.P. in justifying its current conduct.

Chief Superintendent Rod MacKay clearly stated, "This was an operation where we followed all of our rules and regulations and certainly the laws of the land." The overwhelming evidence proves that the purpose and effect of the explosion and the subsequent false reports issued to the public as to its cause was to cast suspicion on environmental activists and to isolate them from public sympathy. The R.C.M.P. maintains that its conduct was justified in order to provide credentials to an informant in its investigation of the protest against the Albert energy companies' installations. It fails to explain why traditional investigative methods that did not involve public fraud were not used.

Whatever rationale the R.C.M.P. might promote for its current conduct, the fact remains that the R.C.M.P. in Alberta, with the approval and collaboration of senior R.C.M.P. officers, actively conspired to set off explosives that would be attributed to political opponents, to deceive the public, to create an atmosphere of alarm including generating death threats and to carry on a massive slander campaign against the victims of this injustice. This is precisely what happened when the

R.C.M.P. virtually sustained key cells of the F.L.Q. at the height of the largely manufactured F.L.Q. crisis in 1970.

In a recent editorial, (February 6, 1999), the Globe and Mail defended the R.C.M.P.'s conduct in Alberta on the basis that it was technically legal as the shack was blown up on private property with the consent of its owners. The Globe argues that "Sometimes police work involves morally ambiguous actions..." In this case however, the victims of the R.C.M.P. operation could not have been so patently guilty if the police had to virtually frame them with a highly intrusive, invasive and proactive ruse. The target in this case denied advocating violence against the oil and gas industry in Alberta, whose own rapacious conduct and wanton destruction of the environment the R.C.M.P. was protecting. In fact, the target of this operation had earlier charges dropped for lack of evidence. It is more likely, with the R.C.M.P.'s history, culture and traditions, that it was manufacturing evidence to build a case against a figure whom the mine owners

want to discredit. No less did it have as its purpose the manipulation of public perception by whipping up hysteria in response to its own staged explosion.

As in the past so in the present, the R.C.M.P. remains an instrument to root out and isolate those who would protest against the status quo so as to make them less effective. In so doing, it uses means that are both legal and illegal. The use of the Northwest Mounted Police and R.C.M.P. to suppress native uprisings, to quell general strikes and arrest their leaders, to break up demonstrations, to foment dissension and confusion within legitimate radical groups and to permit the commission of heinous crimes was ironically also done in the name of law itself! This commitment to the status quo is deeply imbedded within the culture of the force. Indeed, R.C.M.P. witnesses before the McDonald Commission made it clear that they always acted within the mandate which they understood and were encouraged to believe was a mandate to preserve social stability at any cost. Recent documents made public have revealed for the first time that the Privy Council Office and in particular, then Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau had

received full reports on the illegal activities of the R.C.M.P. who were acting in connivance with that Office.

Far from being an isolated occurrence, the conduct of the R.C.M.P. as revealed in this case falls squarely within its traditional role as a means for thought control and for influencing the mass mood. The force's conduct in arresting a leader of the protest movement against the APEC conference in Vancouver recently shows how the force continues to be used by politicians to meddle in public affairs. It is apparent also that the transformation of the R.C.M.P.'s security service into the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS) did not have its intended effect. Most of the thousands of new CSIS members were old R.C.M.P. S.S. officers who had already developed an invasive mindset that could not be easily reoriented. The civilianization of our security service has been more cosmetic than real and has seen no systematic efforts by the members of the political class to rein in its conduct.

Ultimately, the solution to end further "official" criminal and deceitful conduct lies in the hands of the politicians, not the police. The Alberta government should announce its decision to terminate its contract with the R.C.M.P. and to do its own provincial policing. A depoliticized police force composed of new personnel trained to respect the rights of minorities and civil liberties, made to understand its accountability to the public rather than to corporations and politicians and subject to having complaints against it reviewed by a citizens complaint bureau that is elected or appointed by an all party committee of the legislature may offer some hope to ensure that the police in Alberta enforce rather than break the law in the future.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING
Held on February 10, 1999
Meeting Commenced at 8:30 p.m.

Chair; **John Darling**

Attendance: **Lois, John D., Gord, Harry**

Absent: **John G., Zane (away with reason)**
Joe S. (advised later that he was unable to attend)

MINUTES & CORRESPONDENCE:

Minutes of the last two meetings were adopted but there were several spelling mistakes. The minutes have to be edited carefully as out of towners would have difficulty understanding some of the reports.

John Darling reported on the Archives. He will be sending a copy of a document we found relevant to Brian Palmer's biography on Cannon to Brian. John found several valuable documents. He is continuing copy some key material including a document written in the early 1970s explaining our orientation to the NDP very well. We have only one copy of it and will be making more copies of it. We do not know who the author is.

Lois will be moving soon but will continue to have space for the Archives in her new place. John Darling is continuing to do a lot more work on the Archives and is in the process of preparing an index. A great deal of work on it has been done though most of the work is still in the future. Gord mentioned that he was contacted by Robert Hunter from Edmonton who was put in touch with him by Peter M. Hunter seems to have a great deal of interest in Ross and Gord brought him up to date on Ross' situation.

Motion carried to table our response to Barry Weisleder's request that we send greetings to Socialist Action's May Day event.

Motion carried to send a letter to Angie expressing our solidarity in light of her victory in being able to defeat the immigration fraud charge which she has had to deal with now for eleven years. See articles enclosed indicating that the Ontario Court of Appeal threw out the charge against her. We should express our great satisfaction that she was able to overcome this effort to use the charge as a political bludgeon against her.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

John indicated that we are reinvesting our funds.

N.D.P:

There was a discussion about the Newfoundland elections in which the N.D.P. almost doubled its vote and elected two sitting members which they had not done before.

The labour movement continues to be divided which will impact on the Ontario provincial election. CUPE, OPSEU and Steel continue to support the N.D.P. exclusively in Ontario while the C.A.W. and O.S.S.T.F. is engaged in "strategic voting". Health care appears to be a key issue. Hampton has tried to dissipate the Rae legacy.

LABOUR:

It was noted that the C.L.C. is in the process of getting a new leader who will likely be Ken Georgetti of the B.C. Fed.

Gord reported on the effort to try and hold a Left Caucus meeting of the O.S.S.T.F. in January. The caucus is still on very shaky grounds in its efforts to try to refocus the O.S.S.T.F. in a clearer left wing direction.

NEW BUSINESS:

John Darling brought to the comrades attention an article by Jim Miles in Revolutionary Marxism Today critical of Joe Hansen. Harry is circulating an article on the R.C.M.P.'s operation in Alberta which involved exploding an oil well shack to the Left Press and the media. (see enclosure)

Meeting adjourned 10:30 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING
MARCH 24, 1999

ATTENDANCE: GORD, JOHN D., LOIS, HARRY

AWAY WITH REASON: JOE S., JOHN G.

MINUTES:

Motion carried to adopt minutes from the previous meeting subject to correction regarding financial report.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Harry reported on the latest issue of Labour Standard, the new name for the B.I.D.O.M. The editorial board of B.I.D.O.M. has decided to dissolve the previous paper so that it can play a "broader" role in the context of the Labour Party. Over the years, B.I.D.O.M. has moved away from its earlier emphasis on extensive international coverage and now, in the form of Labour Standard, focuses very heavily on trade union and labour party issues. It is obviously trying to play a different role from that of a Marxist educational group in the broader sense. It is focusing on trade union economic and educational issues in an effort to play a broad leftist role in the U.S. Labour Party. It is noted that it is significant that it had dropped the word Marxism in its name.

Harry also reported that he received correspondence from the R.M.T. (Revolutionary Marxism Today) editors inviting us to submit an article on our experience with the N.D.P. Rather than submitting an article on our most recent experience, the comrades decided after a discussion that it would be best to put forward our traditional overall orientation and bring it up-to-date. Harry will prepare a draft of the article for discussion before it is submitted. It should contain a synopsis of our strategic orientation to the N.D.P.

The comrades asked Harry to send a copy of the article on Braverman from Monthly Review.

Harry also reported on articles on the labour party constitutional convention which took place in November in Pittsburgh. Fourteen hundred candidates attended with the only significant additional union support from the United Mine Workers which had already indicated its support for the Labour Party in principle some time earlier. The hostility to the labour party is very strong among the established industrial unions like the U.A.W. which are very heavily integrated into the Democratic Party. The convention adopted a four point program focusing on issues such as medical care, women's reproductive rights, opposition to free trade and trade union rights. It was decided to run in

elections where it was feasible and when there was enough support to give a credible showing. It also affirmed that the Labour Party would only support candidates that are not affiliated or associated with any other political party. There therefore appears to be a failure to develop a clear centralized, cohesive, high profile, aggressive electoral profile which reflects the pressures on the Labour Party leadership from the Democratic Party labour fakers and from Sweeney, the head of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. whom Mazzocchi and other labour party leaders wish to influence but who continue to be integrated into the Democratic Party electoral machine.

Labour Standard contained articles disdainful of the delegates from the riding associations arguing that they dominated the discussion at the convention and were unnecessarily confrontational.

It was also announced that the Socialist Action Group was having its May Day celebration. It was agreed to purchase seven tickets for comrades to attend.

ARCHIVES DISCUSSION:

John Darling reported on the progress of the archives project. Both he and Lois have been spending a considerable amount of time on it. John was able to find an article written by Ross in 1972-1973 focusing on Canadian nationalism

and U.S. penetration of the Canadian economy. This article resulted from our efforts to bring up-to-date at that time data which showed the increased domination by the U.S. ruling class of the Canadian economy. The comrades concluded that, while the article was significant at the time and reflected a sharp critique of the Canadian movement's document at that time, Canada and the Crisis of U.S. Imperialism, saw Canada as a major imperialist country, and that Ross clearly appied the concept of "imperialized imperialism" developed by Mandel at that time, the article has limited current value because of the great deal of research, study and analysis which has taken the place of the Canadian economy in Canada-U.S. relations since that time, We should discuss at our next meeting the possibility of circulating it nonetheless. Copies were made available to some of the comrades to review

John Darling reported further on the archives project indicating that we have fairly complete files of International Socialist Review, International Viewpoint and the other Canadian magazines. There was a general discussion about ensuring that the National Archives was aware of the material which we have so that those persons researching our material in Ottawa would be able to be aware of the additional documents which we had, especially the internal bulletins. There was still several dozen personal files and boxes which contains Ross' notes, correspondence, etc. which still has to be classified. John and Lois proposed

ensuring that whatever material we had went to Ottawa and was not decentralised in different university archive projects. In addition, Lois pointed out that the Canadian Archives does not want our American material. Generally, they are of the view that we need more material on the personal and human aspects of Ross and the comrades. John Riddell suggested that he was skilled in oral interviewing and that he could interview Lois and Joyce regarding their involvement in various social struggles over the years, their family life, their early experiences with Ross and the movement, etc. Lois suggested that she would be a better person to interview Joyce. It was felt that John Darling might be in a better position than John to do an objective, insightful oral interview and to structure the questions in such a way that we would obtain useful objective data. Harry will return the Cuba material to John Darling who will make it available to John Riddell under appropriate conditions.

LABOUR

Gord reported on the O.S.S.T.F. convention. The convention took place the previous week. It is a biannual convention. This year featured a contest for leadership. The O.S.S.T.F. has had an orientation to the labour movement since Buchanan was the leader of it. However, Manners had occupied the office for about six years and there was a sense that there was a need for a leadership change to develop younger and newer leaders. While Earl Manners carried a

fairly militant policy, he was considered somewhat irascible and had difficulty working with the other teachers' groups. He was challenged by Jim McQueen whose roots go back to the Bob Davis crowd in the 1960s and has a left wing oriented tradition. He is, however, a mixed bag although he attracted persons who had a strong sense of the need for greater internal democracy which was a point Manners was weak on. He also promoted the idea of one big union. That is, to work much more closer than Manners was able to with other teachers affiliates and to unite them all in one common collective bargaining unit.

The lack of internal democracy was in fact an important issue. It was pointed out that in District 12 there was almost no time to debate the collective bargaining agreement which the leadership had negotiated and the vote in many ways was forced and undemocratic. Another candidate who ran was Paul Inksetter. McQueen got about 30% of the vote. Manners got about 50 to 60% of the vote. It was clear that he represented an entrenched leadership while McQueen attracted most of the left and radical votes. Bob White gave a very fine class struggle speech. Samuelson of the O.F. of L. gave a very poor speech thought he touched the right buttons.

There were lots of CUPE representatives around reflecting the general support there was for the CUPE strike. In addition, NDPers like Lynn McLeod and Frances

Lankin were present. The Manners slate was broken with McQueen supporters being elected to the position of Treasurer and Vice-president.

The convention reflected a pro-labour mood which has enveloped the O.S.S.T.F. since it affiliated itself both to the O.F. of L. and the C.L.C. some time ago. A resolution was passed to get O.S.S.T.F. to get the elementary teachers to join the union. O.S.S.T.F. continues to participate effectively in union organizing extending its orgainizing drives to private schools and colleges. Liberal Party Leader McGuinty addressed the convention emphasizing the defence of public education and health care with a clever reformist bent. He backed away from commenting on the strike-breaking legislation (Bill A) brought back by the Tories and emphasizing the point to set aside differences and fight the common enemy. Hampton spoke as well. Unfortunately, he described the social contract as both a social and economic success but a political failure. Bill Nybret came to the President's dinner as well as Veronica Lacey who was booed as she was the architect of the efforts of the provincial tory government to take two thirds of a billion dollars out of the public education system. Individually oriented to supporting the N.D.P., Manners and other O.S.S.T.F. leaders have endorsed a strategic voting concept.

Gord also reported on the situation in District 12. Doug Little and other left

wingers who are active in the district supported McQueen for President for District 12 after he lost the election for President of O.S.S.T.F. They want to substitute him for Paul Rook an NDPer who had become isolated and was losing support. John Simopoulos a Tammany Hall politician and manipulative opponent of his based among East York teachers is looking for support from a variety of persons and has received some support from even confused leftwingers despite, for example, opposing central balloting and supporting in-school balloting. McQueen has emerged as a symbol of the O.S.S.T.F. left caucus' hard core left and has emerged generally as the anti-establishment candidate to replace Rook who will step aside. Even McQueen however is a mixed bag and for example opposed the idea of a labour paper when it was proposed at the convention.

Weisleder played a good role on the floor publicly attacking Simopoulos supporters although he is now being subjected to false corruption charges and deserves our support.

Gord reported also that the O.S.S.T.F. has decided to support the candidacy of Sewell and Ryan. However they were unable to decide whether to support Liberal Gerrard Kennedy or former Red Tory and now N.D.P. candidate Irene Atkinson in Toronto's west end. They decided not to endorse either.

NEW BUSINESS:

Lois reported an International Women's Day. There was a young teenage-oriented crowed which seemed very visible at Convocation Hall. Although all the old leaders were there, there were fewer minority women and a lot more younger persons who were playing a very good solidarity oriented unifying role at the Convocation Hall rally. Joan Cummings from N.A.C. gave an effective speech reaffirming the non-negotiability of key demands of the women's movement. The march itself was cancelled partly because the weather was bad, there was no place to march to since the Ryerson facilities were not made available and we would have been obliged to walk on the sidewalk because of the poor weather. A friendly, youthful and militant presence harkens well for the women's movement.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING
Held on May 12, 1999
Meeting Commenced at 8:30 p.m.

Chair; **John D.**

Attendance: **John G. Joe S., Lois B., John D., Gord, Harry K.**

MINUTES & CORRESPONDENCE:

Minutes of March 24, 1999 adopted subject to clarifying the fact that the bottom line of page 2 should have referred to support of trade union rights. There was further discussion about the fact that Revolutionary Marxism Today authorized us to write an article on our N.D.P. orientation as well as the fact that John Darling had initiated a discussion at the previous meeting on our documents regarding Canada/U.S. relations and in particular one document written by Ross Dowson in the early 1970s which was discussed at the last meeting. Motion carried to discuss both of these matters at our next meeting.

REPORT ON SERBIAN ANTI-WAR ACTIVITIES

A motion was carried to have an expedited meeting and to discuss the Serbian situation and the growing anti-war movement. John Darling indicated that 500 people came to a teach-in the Sunday previous at the University of Toronto. He described the discussion as being on a high level. There was strong sentiment in favour of withdrawal. Mel Watkins was one of the sponsors of the meeting.

There was also a rally that Lois, Ross and Harry attended on May 6, 1999 at Convocation Hall which attracted at least 1,000 people. Bissett former Ambassador from Canada to Yugoslavia spoke along with lawyer David Jacobs, nationalist Marjaleena Repo, Marxist Economist Michel Chossudovski as well as Ursula Franklin. The meeting was initiated by the Ad Hoc Committee to stop Canada's participation in the war in Yugoslavia headed by David Orchard's Citizens Concerned About Free Trade. Present at the meeting were members of the Serbian community, a youthful activist crowd, individual trade unionists from the C.A.W. and other trade unions, red Tories, liberals like June Calwood and a cross section of radicals.

There was a general discussion about the war and the anti-war movement. With respect to the anti-war movement, the consensus held in the discussion was that a broad vibrant anti-war movement was in the process of being formed which cut across class lines, that carried within it elements of the establishment and which revived some of the enthusiasm and teach-in atmosphere of the anti-Vietnam war movement of the late 1960s. It was also agreed that the situation in some respects was more confusing with the cover of "humanitarianism" having a disorienting effect as was evident by the initial support which the N.D.P. parliamentary caucus gave to the bombing campaign from which it subsequently unceremoniously withdrew including Svend Robinson, the fact that the C.L.C. Toronto Convention narrowly defeated a motion calling for Canada to withdraw from the bombing campaign, the fact that many including several on the left were putting forward a position which would justify U.N. intervention, etc. Internationally in such countries as England, important elements of the Left have also become disoriented supporting the NATO bombing campaign "Ken Livingstone and

Vanessa Redgrave in England for example. General consensus is developing among the labour and the left (Oskar Lafontaine in Germany, Tony Benn in England) against the war. It is obvious that a clear line has to be developed not only against the bombing which was a central demand at the protests but also for withdrawal of NATO. Harry raised the issue of self-determination for Kosovo which Gord indicated deserved further discussion. It was suggested that the real purpose for the bombing campaign was to replace NATO which has been without clear direction for some time and to re-establish a firmer U.S./England link undermining the possibility of a German/French based European regional security system which the United States would find more difficult to control. The current political situation involving Serbia and the launching of the war reflected among other things the continuing instability and unreliability of the United Nations. Popular sentiment while in the majority supportive of this "humanitarian" war was relatively weak in Eastern Europe and is now dramatically weakening elsewhere. Harry referred to an article in International Viewpoint which pointed out that imperialist powers sought to decentralize ex-Yugoslavia even further to undermine Milosevic's influence which included promoting and/or maintaining a degree of public ownership in industry, central planning and concessions to the Yugoslavian working class. It was pointed out that any real solution would have to reject both Serbian nationalism and Greater Croation nationalism both of which have resulted in ethnic cleansing and virulent oppression at various times.

N.D.P.

There was a general discussion about the provincial election campaign in Ontario. Strategic voting was a central issue. Despite the weakness of the Liberal Party and its

conservatism on economic issues, it was felt that it may still end up uniting the anti-Harris vote. To what extent strategic voting will be successful remains to be seen. The subsequent poor showing in the debate derailed the Liberals, pushed the N.D.P. forward and exposed the Liberals' drift to the right undermining their lack of commitment to the O.S.S.T.F.-C.A.W. Overall the post-Rae N.D.P. parliamentary bureaucratic leadership of the provincial party is maneuvering for room on the left in the election. Hampton's left populous position emphasizing removing the tax cuts for the wealthiest at 6% and restoring health and educational services and standards as sending a clear class message to the electorate although to what extent people are hearing what was said or even care what was being said given the previous N.D.P. government's failure to live up to its program, fuzzy image and continuous compromises remains to be seen. Although Peter Kormos and others take the position at least publicly that the N.D.P. leadership has broken from the Rae machine and Hampton has attempted to put distance between himself and the social contract and has identified himself as a person with a working class background representing "ordinary" people against the wealthy, the disillusionment with all political parties continues nonetheless. The support for the Liberal party appears very soft and voter turmoil and unpredictability continue perhaps with a major shift to the N.D.P. at the campaign's end. The N.D.P. remains very low in the polls however notwithstanding the fact that much of the support for tax cuts is evaporating now that the electorate has seen the consequences of such cuts on education and healthcare.

The comrades are attempting to intervene in the campaign in various ways including providing financial support.

Lois reported on the Federal convention and the resolutions that are being prepared for it. should be

Meeting adjourned circa 10:20 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING
Held on Tuesday September 28, 1999
Meeting Commenced at 8:30 p.m.

Chair: **John G.**

Attendance: **Joe S., Lois B., Harry K., John G., John D.**

Away with Reason: **Gord D.**

MINUTES:

Motion carried to adopt minutes of August 31, 1999. Motion to postpone adopting minutes of last meeting to the next meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

John indicated some disbursements that have been incurred including his ongoing work on the archives. Motion carried to accept Treasurer's Report.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

Harry reported that he spoke to Ernie about setting up a celebration of Vern Olson's life. Ernie was going on vacation. John Darling agreed to contact John Riddell to see if the Communist League would agree to participate in such a meeting and Harry would contact Barry Weisleder. Ernie would contact various people once it was set up and participate in it. We should call a variety of persons to come to it including George and Bea Bryant (who now live in Leamington), hold it at an accessible time, etc.

Lois reported on the convention of COMER (Committee for Monetary Reform) which took place at Guelph University. A large left and student attendance was present. Ann Emmett and Elizabeth Davies have emerged as key leaders of the organization. It was

co-sponsored by John McMurtry whose involvement with the left goes back to Waffle days.

N.D.P.

John Glenn reported on the provincial council meeting which took place the previous weekend. Howard Hampton was present and gave a report on the election. In the discussion which followed, Joe Flexer started off by criticizing the N.D.P. for not having a clear left orientation. However, he got carried away and ended up criticizing the N.D.P. for not continuing the extra-parliamentary tradition of the days of protest. This was met with jeers from a lot of the trade unionists who were present and who were part of the official days of protest campaign and who in fact participated actively in the days of protest at least initially, such as Mike Lewis and the steelworkers. Flexer went on to call for the public ownership of Ford resulting in further alienating himself from the provincial council delegates who were present.

The comrades had a general discussion on how best to intervene in the N.D.P. situation right now. It was pointed out that it was remarkable after the first provincial council meeting that took place that no serious forces within the N.D.P., let alone the leadership, called for an open discussion on what went wrong at the last election. Lois pointed out that within the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Metro Labour Council, participation by affiliated activists and unionists was down and that with the OFL executive sitting on all bodies and controlling all parts of the labour movement, the labour bureaucracy continues to feel very secure in its control of the locals and in their own close ongoing relationship with the N.D.P. political leadership. Howard Hampton's speech blamed strategic voting. His analysis, of course, ignored the broader political

issues of which strategic voting tactics were merely a symptom. Prior to the provincial council meeting, publicity was being given to alleged efforts by an element within the leadership to call for the expulsion of C.A.W. leader Buzz Hargrove because he supported strategic voting (which meant supporting the Liberals in many ridings). The proposition to impose discipline on Hargrove however received only a handful of votes and was opposed by the overwhelming majority. Also, efforts to discipline Olivia Chow for supporting John Sewell in Rosedale Riding collapsed. The Rosedale Riding delegates made it clear that they did not want to discipline Chow and wanted to leave the issue behind.. While the provincial council meeting was taking place, John Glenn reported that Barry Weisleder was selling copies of Socialist Action which openly identifies with the fourth international delegates.

It was pointed out in the discussion that the present conjunctural situation within the N.D.P. had some unusual features. On the one hand, while the N.D.P. political bureaucracy and trade union backers in the steelworkers and other identified unions were firmly in control of the party, they are far from being in a position to carry on a campaign against the left given the fact that the O.N.D.P. had the worst electoral showing in seventy years of existence (including its two predecessors). This however is not to suggest that the left in any real way poses a threat to the O.N.D.P. leadership. In fact, most of those who would form the milieu for opposition to the leadership are either inactive or have left the party or are sitting on the sidelines. The leadership does not feel threatened. In this kind of vacuum within the N.D.P., notwithstanding the fact that the Socialist Caucus has some resonance for its views, especially when Hargrove echoes a clear socialist line, the Socialist Caucus and for that matter no other force poses any kind of serious or real organized threat to the leadership. The leadership can therefore

be munificent to its left opponents. On the other hand, the absence of any real social forces in motion within the N.D.P. means that disoriented persons like Weisleder are not restrained from their tendencies to be overly-confrontational, declamatory and confrontational. In this kind of situation, it is easy to understand both why Weisleder shows total ignorance of the concept of entryism while at the same time the leadership of the N.D.P. ignores him.

Harry suggested that perhaps we are too soft on Hargrove. He pointed out that the C.A.W. alone could mobilize a hundred delegates to a provincial council meeting in Ontario given their huge membership in the province and the fact that the locals are affiliated to the N.D.P. A further discussion followed in which it was suggested that the comrades give serious consideration to initiatives which might be taken in order to give the left some kind of organized presence within the N.D.P. This should be done, as John Darling urged, through the Socialist Caucus. In particular, two initiatives were discussed. One involved circulating an open letter at provincial council meetings focusing on one or two simple issues. The other would involve two downtown N.D.P. ridings perhaps cosponsoring a debate between Hargrove and a defender of the N.D.P.'s present course. Both of these ideas were tabled for further discussion to our next membership meeting.

EDUCATIONAL:

John Darling gave an educational on Canadian Nationalism. In particular, he focused in on the documents published within the movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s in which our positions on Canada/U.S. relations were developed including some very interesting articles which Ross was instrumental in writing and which foreshadowed

developments which proved to be true twenty and thirty years later. The broad outlines and thesis of these documents were reviewed by John including the events which gave rise to a radical Canadian Nationalist consciousness from Amchitka to the development of the autonomy movement within unions. The discussion pointed out how the basic positions of our movement continued to be true and were proven true by recent events, how the nationalist milieu has always veered to the left and towards the working class and has been unable to form any viable organizations on its own or within the capitalist parties, how the movement to preserve social programs, Medicare, social housing, employment insurance and other reforms have a strong nationalist and anti-U.S. capitalist dynamic, how the Canadian bourgeoisie has been unable to take control of, or influence this movement to any significant degree and how the current profile of Canadian nationalists around Paul Hellyer and others is politically unstable and simply reflects the inability of the N.D.P. to play a dynamic role on the left at present and to encompass these sentiments which will find their home back in the N.D.P. and labour movement when the N.D.P. reemerges as a central area of activity and political debate and motion.

NEW BUSINESS:

It was decided to hold the next meeting at 599 Dovercourt Rd. (Harry's place) at which time he will give an educational on the conjuncteral economic situation and its impact on the social role that labour parties play throughout the world as well as the current balance of forces and the possibilities of developing revolutionary struggles in the future. The meeting will take place on Wednesday October 13, 1999.

Meeting adjourned circa 10:30 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING
Held on Tuesday October 26, 1999
Meeting Commenced at 8:30 p.m.

Chair: **Zane B.**

Attendance: **Gord D., John G., John D., Joe S., Zane B., Harry K.**

Present as Guests: **Geraldine, Mark, Ebro**

Away with Reason: **Lois B.**

MINUTES:

Motion carried to adopt minutes of the previous meeting subject to corrections.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

Walter Dowson died last Monday. He was 38 and died from either a heart attack or stroke. Funeral arrangements are being made towards the end of this week and comrades are urged to attend.

Harry reported on the Vern Olsen memorial meeting scheduled to take place on December 4, 1999 at the International Student Centre between 7:30 p.m. and 9:45 p.m. As John Riddell and the Communist League have decided not to participate, the Socialist Action and Forward Group will be organizing and building the memorial meeting. Motion carried to ask Dave to give some reminiscences regarding his father's political work and we will also approach the Cuban consulate to see if they will send a speaker. There will also be speakers both from the Forward Group and from Socialist Action.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

John mentioned we had approximately $2,000.00 in our account. The comrades wish to contribute to a loan that Joe required in order to buy tools in order to obtain employment. It was agreed that the amount of $3,000.00 would be advanced to Joe out of the funds of the movement but each of the comrades would undertake to commit themselves to pay back to the movement any portion of this amount if Joe does not pay the money back in six months time plus interest. The comrades circulated a written statement committing themselves to pay the movement back in specified amounts should it become necessary but that we would access the monies that the movement presently has in order to advance the funds to Joe.

N.D.P.:

John Darling's addendum to the Forward Group minutes of October 13, 1999 were filed. In the discussion that took place, it was agreed that it was a good idea to ask the Spadina/Trinity Riding Association to invite Buzz Hargrove to come and address the riding and any other downtown ridings that may wish to participate in organizing a debate between him and a leading figure of the N.D.P. on the direction of the N.D.P. We should contact riding activists in order to ensure that such a motion receives support at the upcoming Spadina/Trinity meeting on November 10, 1999. A motion was also carried to support Barry Weisleder as the provincial council delegate for the riding. It was however felt at the meeting that there may be limited utility in putting out a leaflet as was suggested in the minutes of the earlier meeting. It was decided that we should reconsider the question of whether we want to put out a broad sheet and discuss it at the next meeting.

EDUCATIONAL:

There was an extended educational given by Harry on the present conjunctural situation in the world economy and its effect on the working class and its political thinking and leadership, especially in the Labour parties. Harry pointed out that the international contradictions between overproduction and under consumption continue to dominate capitalism during the period of global expansion and in fact have added additional complex problems to capital including a highly bloated financial sector which bears little or no resemblance to the industrial infrastructure that supports it in various countries, rapid moving of capital from country to country of a speculative nature creating instability such as seen in Mexico and South Asia, exacerbation of extremes between wealth and poverty, instability of certain sectors of the economy, intensified monopolization, etc.

The working class by and large has not been defeated overwhelmingly in any major country and retains its combativeness and willingness to be mobilized. Labour parties that were elected by workers in order to protect them from the impact of globalization and the introduction of rampant capitalism into Central and Eastern Europe have failed to come across with the goods and meet the workers' needs. Overall, the present situation can be characterized as one of clarification with large pockets of cynicism generated by the giant shadow of defeat of the only major post-capitalist experience the world has seen in 1989 and 1990 in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The absence of any alternative visions existing in reality or otherwise and the pervasive aggressiveness of the new capitalist era has eliminated the possibilities of rapid regroupment of revolutionary faces at the current stage of historical development.

However this era does have some interesting aspects to it including limiting the mediating role that labour parties can play between capital and labour and which they traditionally play in times of capitalist expansion, creating eddies both to the left and right of the labour parties as expressions of social discontent and protest, engendering an anti-authoritarian international youth culture, etc. Although taking on a unique form of expression, the substantive issue of leadership remains critical in the overall situation. Historical opportunities for major gains continue to arise from time to time and mass expressions of discontent flare up and become visible but are not sustained over a an intermediate or lengthy period of time because of the absence of an implanted leadership with a revolutionary strategy able to give directions to the class as a whole. However the disintegration of capitalist illusions such as that hard work can make someone rich and that the capitalist society provides equal opportunity for all militates in favour of growing political and class consciousness.

In the discussion, various issues were raised including whether or not a class based rather then an issue based approach in analyzing social discontent was still valid, whether it was necessary for the workers to undergo serious economic pressures before choosing a revolutionary strategy, whether capitalism, if it survives for fifty years, will undermine the integrity of the global environment beyond repair, etc.

Following the educational discussion, there was a motion carried that Harry ask ~~Ebro~~ Lois whether she would be prepared to give an educational on a Marxist analysis of the Kurdish question.

Meeting adjourned circa 10:45 p.m.

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Addendum to FG minutes, Oct. 13 by John Darling

Oct. 24

Treasurer's Report: Motion carried to deposit an additional $2000, not $3000

Business arising: the proposal to issue any broadsheet on any topic we might want, through the Socialist Caucus was motivated by the desire that we not prematurely split what tiny forces there are of the left addressing the NDP, or act was if there were another informal left caucus separate from the Socialist Caucus. We would therefore voluntarily submit the broadsheet to the Socialist Caucus for its agreement -- a useful method of seeing just how serious SC is. If SC refuses to agree to our broadsheet then we would consider putting it out under the name of the Forward Group, addressing the broadsheet to the left generally, inside and outside the NDP.

"Barry's Group," Socialist Caucus, is still officially distinct from SA (or weak enough to be tolerated by the NDP brass). By submitting our broadsheet to SC we seek to build a unified left voice (coalition) in the NDP. SC should be more flexible politically than SA; if it's not then SC is dead as a SA front. I think we have to go through some experiences with SC before ignoring or abandoning it, and declaring it bankrupt.

Section on CAW: The minutes do not reflect the reality that the most dynamic, powerful sector of Canadian unions in the private or public sector has shown its mettle in decisive fashion once again in these most recent negociations with the Big Three auto makers (big American transnationals). Our discussion tended to imply that Hargrove somehow ran the negotiations inadequately, by not sticking to a strike threat in FORD negotiations over demands to force acceptance of unionization in MAGNA plants (two different bodies of workers; what if for various reasons the Magna workers voted down the CAW unionization bid? In any case, it's Magna workers who will decide, and the CAW has to revamp its drive drive to unionize Magna beyond just bald pay and benefits. By ignoring the social role of unions (and being unable at this time to appeal to the workers the importance of a political role thru the NDP), the CAW is up against the considerable odds. Magna workers are paid less but receive "profit-sharing" bonuses to the same value as CAW workers. Anyway Magna workers have to be convinced themselves to vote the union in -- a critique of Hargrove for running a purely economic recruiting campaign at Magna, is more in line.

Hargrove's attempt to oragnize Magna workers thru a strike at Ford was motivated by the difficulty the Harris gov't has put in their way to certify a new bargaining unit (50% of all workers, not just those voting). His attempt to tie it into a strike at Ford was just a bureaucratic ploy, a shortcut along the lines of getting Chrysler to be "neutral" in the certification campaign of its suppliers (where he succeeded); no wonder he was "not really serious about it." Hopefully the Magna workers will understand.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING
Held on Tuesday November 22, 1999
Meeting Commenced at 8:30 p.m.

Chair: John Glenn

Attendance: Lois, Harry, Gord, John D., John G.

Away with Reason: Joe S., Zane B.

MINUTES:

Motion carried to adopt minutes of the previous meeting.

BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF MINUTES:

There was a discussion about the funeral for ~~Hugh~~ WALTER Dowson. Lois expressed the opinion that the daughters idealized Walter somewhat. It was highly regrettable that no mention was made other then by Stu Sinclair of Hugh Dowson and the very important role he played for the family and for Walter.

There was also discussion about the commemoration for Vern Olson. Harry will speak on behalf of the Forward Group, the Cuban Consul has been asked to speak. We should talk about how Vern's life reflected much about the evolution of the times that he lived in and that his physical and emotional dissipation paralleled the disintegration of the movement. In addition to outlining the critical role that he played in defence of the Cuban revolution, we should also talk about his reputation for honesty, his willingness to defend Williams as a refugee from injustice in the United States, his moral character, his commitment to unity within the revolutionary left and the important role that Ann played in his life. Efforts should be made to contact various people in order to encourage them

to come, including some old timers who have been out of touch recently. Comrades agreed to phone contacts in order to help build the meeting.

David & girlfriend
Orchard & Irma
Zane & John
Emmie & Jess
Dave Middleton
Ross & Lois
Harry & Gord
Contact

CORRESPONDENCE:

No correspondence

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

Rowbottom, a Canadian economic nationalist, is touring various universities on behalf of the nationalist monetarist left. Lois described ongoing interest over the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle and around left monetarist ideas which comrades thought reflected a certain degree of malaise in the left, a form of populism and confusion. John McMurtry of Guelph University is promoting a book that he has written called The Cancer Stage of Capitalism which is receiving a wide reception.

ARCHIVES REPORT:

John Darling has sorted most of the boxes but we have found new ones and we are moving into renting new space as well as building racks so that we can index the new materials. Some of the boxes appear not to have been opened for twenty or thirty years. A letter typed up by Ross which appears to be an English translation of an original letter by Trotsky on the Chinese question was distributed among the comrades.

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N.D.P.:

Gord reported on the Spadina NDP meeting. A resolution was passed calling for the riding to initiate a meeting which would organize a debate between Hampton and the left represented by Hargrove and Watkins. This resolution, along with another resolution

proposed by Barry Weisleder supporting Mumia was passed unanimously. There are many left wingers and it is a left riding but the membership appeared to have been working together for some time and the atmosphere at the meeting was that persons elected to the executive should be active in the riding. Unfortunately, Barry Weisleder along with David Orenstein repeatedly ran for various positions from Provincial Executive Rep to Trade Union Liason to Member at Large and continuously were being defeated. Naturally such an aggressive stance was a tactical error and likely would tend to reflect on others present such as Gord and Harry who may be identified as Trotskyists. It is likely therefore that our integration into the riding and its leadership is going to involve some time and not be an easy or immediate process. Given that those present were largely left wingers and supported our resolutions, we should not act in a manner which would tend to enhance some idea that we are a bunch of outsiders wanting to take the organization over.

Rosario Marchese gave a strong left wing speech in which he called for a labour paper and expressed that, over time, he has begun to see the importance of addressing the big political issues rather then getting bogged down in miniscule municipal issues. The one issue around which a certain degree of contraversy was raised involved an apparent attempt by those organizing the meeting to deny Lilli Charmane the right to vote at the meeting. She was an activist formerly from the Parkdale Riding who finally was given the right to vote towards the end of the meeting by a membership vote despite the position taken by some of those present that she had to be approved by the Provincial Office before being recognized as a local member. Liz, who is a member of Socialist Action, intervened aggressively in her defence and almost derailed the meeting from proceeding to deal with the resolutions.

Lois reported on the N.D.P. minority report publication published by Bill Blaikie a left wing M.P. from the west and the N.D.P. trade critic. A copy of his report is enclosed.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new items were raised.

Meeting adjourned circa 10:15 p.m.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the Ontario New Democratic Party faired poorly in the provincial election campaign earlier this year;

AND WHEREAS many of our traditional supporters and electorate have distanced themselves from our party or have withdrawn from active political activity;

AND WHEREAS it is urgent that the party attempt at present to rebuild its support, to bring back into its ranks those who have identified with us in the past and to create unity behind a program and goals that will advance democratic socialism in this province;

AND WHEREAS, as part of this process, it is desirable for us to engage in a broad discussion within the party and to consider all possible alternatives and solutions necessary in order to re-establish our credibility, especially among working people;

AND WHEREAS such an inclusive discussion should involve all of our traditional supporters, our membership, the Riding Associations, and representatives from organized labour and the academic community;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Trinity/Spadina N.D.P. Riding Association invite Buzz Hargrove, President of the Canadian Auto Workers Union and University of Toronto Professor Mel Watkins to speak in a debate on the direction and future of the New Democratic Party in Ontario at a meeting to be organized early in the new year;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Howard Hampton and other representatives of the O.N.D.P. leadership also be invited to participate in such a debate;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that our Riding Association invite other Riding Associations in the downtown Toronto area to co-sponsor the debate.

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD GROUP MEETING
Held on Tuesday December 15, 1999
Meeting Commenced at 8:30 p.m.

Chair: **Gord**

Attendance: **Lois, Harry, Gord, John D.,**

Away with Reason: **Joe S., Zane B.**

MINUTES:

Motion carried to adopt minutes of the last meeting subject to minor spelling corrections.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACTS:

There was a discussion about the Vern Olsen memorial meeting. Attendance was small in part because of difficulties in organizing and phoning and the fact that the other tendancies did not participate. Andy Lehrer was there from the Militant Group Tendancy. They are planning on publishing a new version of their paper that comes out from time to time. They are heavily oriented to British politics.

Many of the 15 or 20 people who attended were part of our past periphery and their attendance indicates ongoing identification with us. The speeches were good including by Harry and Lois. The Communist League which has an attitude that Olsen and the Fair Play for Cuba Committee was exclusively their terrain in a sectarian manner refused to participate in the memorial at all. David Olsen was present for most of the meeting. Comments about Ann Olsen from Lois and the broad sweep of Vern's life from the thirties to the nineties gave us an opportunity to review the parallels between Vern's life

and the fortunes of the movement. This included the successful campaign that F.P.C.C. ran in defence of the Cuban revolution throughout the 1960s, the dissolution of the movement as a unified force in the early 1970s and the subsequent difficulty in re-establishing it as an influential current. Despite the low attendance which was also contributed to by the failure of any members of the S.A. to attend other then Barry and the fact that an "official" commemoration had already taken place, it was a useful meeting to have and re-established us to some of the members of our periphery.

N.D.P.:

A provincial convention is taking place in June and the Socialist Caucus is also calling a province wide meeting in March in order to prepare for it. We should of course participate in the Spring conference of the Socialist Caucus although it is uncertain whether or not it is likely to be a representative or meaningful event. This is especially so since John Darling reported that he had gone to an earlier meeting that was held of the Socialist Caucus at which only five or six people showed up.

It was also pointed out that the Federal N.D.P. continues to drift to the right, especially in light of the way that it is tailending Chretien over his recent challenge to Quebec over Quebec's right to decide for itself what the wording of a future referendum on sovereignty would be and over what constitutes a clear majority. Cleverly, Joe Clark finessed the N.D.P. by challenging Chretien's confrontational stance thereby currying favour with the nationalist milieu in Quebec which sees the Liberal Party as a sell-out and an instrument of Anglophone domination. Just as Audrey McLaughlin capitulated to pressures to support the Charlottetown Accord thereby putting the Federal N.D.P. on the bandwagon of the capitalist parties several years ago in the cross-country

referendum that was held at that time, so also Alexa McDonough appears to be doing the same at this critical time.

LABOUR:

Harry gave a brief report about how activists in Local 113 of the Amalgamated Transit Union had finally decided to put out a newsletter and get better organized.

NEW BUSINESS:

Lois described the hospital cutbacks that were taking place and that were visible at the hospital where Ross is.

Calendar was read and meeting adjourned circa 10:15 p.m.